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THE

ORIENTAL ANNUAL,

OR

Scenes in India.

42473

BY THE

REV. HOBART CAUNTER, B.D.

WITH

TWENTY-TWO ENGRAVINGS

FROM DRAWINGS

BY WILLIAM DANIELL, R.A.

H-J-4

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It has been deemed advisable so far to depart from the plan of this Work, as to postpone the continuation of "Lives of the Moghul Emperors." The more miscellaneous character of the present volume will, however, it is hoped, render it neither less useful nor less generally acceptable than the volumes which have preceded it.

ENGRAVINGS

FROM

Drawings

BY

WILLIAM DANIELL, ESQ. R.A.

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SCENES IN INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

Among all the varieties of architecture in the East, few are so imposing, and none so solemn, as the monumental. Both Hindoos and Mohammedans have freely opened their treasures to cover with magnificent structures the ashes of their heroes, and frequently of their relatives. Millions have been lavished upon those proud monuments of departed greatness; which are noble, indeed, but melancholy memorials of the foul dust contained within their shrines, and of the dreadful process of decay which has taken place beneath their towering pinnacles and gorgeous domes. They are but splendid mockeries raised by the living over the dead, to perpetuate a tale of which every individual upon earth must one day be the hero; and to consecrate to the veneration of posterity the memory of those who, having been eminent in their lives, deserve to be remembered in their deaths.

Whenever our steps are drawn towards "the place of graves," whether it be among the humble tumult,

thrown up side by side in a village churchyard, or among those sumptuous edifices, upon the traceried battlements of which the bright rays of an eastern sun sparkle as if in joyous triumph to mark the spot where the bodies of heroes have been entombed; whether we contemplate the "sculptured urns," raised over the ashes of those whom vast wealth and remote genealogies have signalized, or the humble tomb-stone that heads the cotter's grave; whether we walk among the avenues of those repositories of the dead where the deformed and loathsome relics of idolaters repose, or in the less heeded grave-yard, where the earthly remains of uncivilized man have been cast, without a prayer to that God who has reclaimed the soul which he bestowed,—but one feeling predominates upon the contemplative mind,—"the end of all things is death!"

I have frequently walked in India amidst the crumbling monuments, which have enshrined the bodies of kings ere the earth had absorbed them in her maternal bosom, for that relief which sadness of thought produces, when the mind has been wearied by professional occupation, or excited by those vexations which, though apparently trifling in the detail, are frequently among the severest trials of our mortal state; and perhaps there is no country in the world where so many of these proud trophies of death are to be found in such preservation and splendour. Upon the plains of old Delhi, which once groaned under the massy piles of palaces, temples, and public edifices of every description, the ruins of numerous mausoleums are at this moment scattered, and many of the build-

ings still remain entire, to attest the munificence of those who erected them. They continue to attract the admiration of travellers, who visit this celebrated plain with that sort of veneration which is felt at contemplating the ruins of Nineveh, Babylon, and the more recent, but scarcely less magnificent, Persepolis. Sic transit gloria mundi!

The noble structure represented in the engraving, is said to be the tomb of Baber, who immortalized his name both as a conqueror and legislator. It cannot, however, have contained the remains of that illustrious sovereign, as Baber "expired at the Charbagh, near Agra, on the sixth of the first Jemadi, in the year of the Hegira 937, (December 26th, Anno Domini 1530,) in the fiftieth year of his age, and thirty-eighth of his reign as a sovereign prince. His body, in conformity with the wish which he had expressed, was carried to Cabul, where it was interred in a hill that still bears his name."*

Little appears to be known of the history of this mausoleum; but it is generally assumed throughout the district of Rohilcund, where it is to be seen near the town of Sambhul, that it was erected to the memory of the founder of the Mohammedan dynasty in India. If so, it is a cenotaph, and not the tomb of that distinguished man: nevertheless, it is highly venerated by the Mohammedan inhabitants of the province, and is in truth an edifice of remarkable beauty. It is extremely simple in its structure, being massy and imposing—grand from its dimensions, and imposing from its stern sobriety, strictly according with the architectural taste of the

* Supplement to the Memoirs of Baber.

period in which it is supposed to have been erected. It is perfectly unadorned; built with a severe though chaste judgment, and is admirable for the mathematical symmetry of its proportions, its ponderous strength, the vastness of its forms, and the perfect consonance of its various parts. The solid compactness of its bulk, and the strength of the materials of which it is composed, render it almost imperishable; for though now almost entirely neglected, it has suffered comparatively nothing from the lapse of time, and those changes of season, of temperature, and of weather, which in every part of the habitable world leave the desolating brand of decay upon the proudest monuments of human ingenuity.

In almost every district of Hindostan, those beautiful structures, which had been raised to protect from open desecration the remains of once distinguished men, or as a perpetual record to posterity how highly they were the objects of cotemporary veneration, are now often converted into the abodes of banditti; where these latter share with the most venomous reptiles of the jungle—and sometimes even with beasts of prey—a temporary, but always perilous, abode. At a distance from populous towns, those repositories of the illustrious dead, which have been suffered to decay, afford not only a favourable shelter from the inclemency of the elements, but a secure retreat from the prying scrutiny of judicial functionaries; and it too often happens that, in India, such functionaries, so long as their own immediate neighbourhoods are tolerably free from violators of the public peace, seek not to investigate at a distance the haunts of the latter, who

are therefore allowed to follow the practices of their lawless avocation with comparative impunity.

The tomb of Baber, as it is called, is built near the town of Sambhul, in the district of Rohilcund, which forms a portion of the present province of Delhi. Sambhul originally gave its name to the whole of that division which goes under the more modern designation of Rohilcund. In many parts of this district are still to be seen the remains of magnificent palaces, temples, gardens, mosques, and mausoleums. The Rohillahs, who chiefly inhabit this district, are a courageous, hardy race, fond of desperate achievements; but, like all such tribes, turbulent, impatient under restraint, and therefore difficult to govern. Unlike the Mohammedan races generally, they exercise the profession of agriculture, as well as that of arms; but whenever called to the field, they are always ready to relinquish the plough for the sword, the latter of which is often hanging at their girdles whilst they are scattering the seed in the furrow. Like every class of fierce and intractable spirits, they submit to no discipline, and despise all moral influence as a sort of spiritual bondage, incompatible with the natural freedom of man, whose will, as they contend, ought not to be shackled, since he was born with liberty of choice, and with reason to direct that choice to issues best concurring to promote his own enjoyments. These semi-barbarous Afghans are fierce and sanguinary, and do not hesitate frequently to employ both craft and treachery for the accomplishment of their revenge when roused to desperate purposes by real or, too often, by imaginary wrong.

Whilst I was in India, an instance of this implacable spirit occurred in the neighbourhood of Sambhul. Two brothers had a quarrel about the distribution of some property, which they had obtained from a traveller whom they had robbed and murdered in the jungle. Through the mediation of the wife of the elder robber the feud was allayed, and they were apparently reconciled. The younger brother, however, was determined to glut his sanguinary vengeance upon the elder, who had obtained a larger share of the plunder, which he claimed by right of primogeniture, —a claim to which the other, conscious of his inferiority in personal strength and courage, was reluctantly compelled to yield. For months he feigned the most ardent attachment towards his intended victim, until he had completely lulled every suspicion of treachery, which the former seemed at first to entertain; for bad men seldom place confidence in those whom they have wronged.

Having at length completely disarmed the apprehensions of his brother, the treacherous Rohillah determined upon the accomplishment of his fatal purpose. Repairing to an unfrequented part of the forest, he dug a hole about a yard square, and upwards of twenty feet in depth. This he covered with twigs, placing over them a layer of jungle-grass and dried leaves, so as completely to hide the aperture from casual scrutiny. When this was accomplished, he repaired to the hut of his brother, who rented a small tract of land near the border of the wood, upon which he had erected his frail dwelling, composed of bamboo and palm-leaves. The traitor was received

with cordial welcome by his elder brother, to whom he related a plausible story of two travellers, who, having halted at a certain village, had declared their intention of proceeding through the jungle about dusk, in order to avoid the intensity of the sun's heat.

The unsuspecting brother, always ready to be a party in any enterprize from which money was likely to accrue, readily embraced the proposal of his treacherous relative to accompany him and attack the travellers. The wife of the too credulous Rohillah, however, entertaining some suspicion of her brother-in-law's intention, endeavoured to dissuade her husband from accompanying him. Her entreaties were of no avail; the prospect of plunder was too alluring, and the robber accompanied his crafty relation about sunset towards the imagined goal of his eager but criminal expectation. The treacherous plotter assured his victim that the travellers were carrying about them concealed property, which circumstance he represented himself to have ascertained from a person who had travelled in company with them to the village where they halted, that person having overheard a conversation between them which led to this conclusion.

So plausible was the traitor's story, that his brother's suspicions, which had been at first somewhat disturbed by the apprehensions of his wife, were completely lulled, and he eagerly plunged into the forest, incited by the hope of plunder. The wife followed at a distance, unperceived by the brothers. Evening had already begun to project her dusky shadows over the scene. The distant cry of the jackal was heard at intervals, "startling the dull ear of night" with

a thousand echoes; and the leathern wing of the fox-bat flapped among the branches which overhung the narrow and tangled pathway. The moon slowly rose above the darkening horizon, which was slightly fleckered with a faint crimson tinge, leaving on the dim grey of the cloudless heavens the still perceptible reflections of the fading sunlight.

The two desperate men, bent upon different objects, advanced towards the spot where those objects were expected by both to receive a different consummation. Scarcely a word passed between them as they threaded with intensely preoccupied thoughts the mazes of the forest. The younger brother led the way, and having reached the edge of the concealed grave, he paused, and raising his finger to his lip, as if to impose silence, beckoned his victim to approach. By this time the moon threw sufficient light through the interstices of the foliage to render near objects sufficiently visible; yet the shadow from the trees which flanked the foot-track on either side completely hid from view the artificial pathway which had been thrown over the pit. No sooner had the unsuspecting Rohillah advanced to the brink, than a slight push accomplished the purpose of his treacherous relation, and he was precipitated into the grave prepared for him by the hand of one in whose veins the purple tide circulated from the source which had supplied his own. His reproaches were only answered with taunts and mockeries.

The wretch who had thus cruelly betrayed to an untimely death one so nearly allied to him by blood, prepared now to accomplish his long-cherished project of

vengeance. Having previously brought near the spot a number of large stones, which he had concealed in the tall grass that grew beside the pathway, he dropped them upon the head of his unhappy victim, until the latter ceased to breathe. He then filled up the hole, and returned to the hut of his murdered brother. The wife of the latter had witnessed the whole transaction; but knowing that any attempt to rescue her husband after he had fallen into the snare so successfully laid for him by his murderer, would only provoke her own doom, she returned to her now desolate home, determined to retaliate upon the sanguinary criminal that destruction which he had so cruelly cast upon one of his own kindred. Having armed her hand with a crease, the determined woman placed herself beside the entrance of her hut, anticipating the Rohillah's return. Resolved that the traitor should expiate by his own death the heinous crime of which he had just been guilty, she listened with agonizing eagerness to catch the sound of approaching footsteps, naturally imagining that he would visit the home of his victim so soon as he had fully completed the perpetration of his unnatural villany. Her anticipations were shortly realized. Her quick ear caught the dull tread of a single person advancing with cautious but hurried steps to the place where she stood, with an arm nerved to vengeance, and a dagger ready to strike.

The fratricide at length reached the doorway. There was no light, save that which the moon flung into the hut; and as the roof was low, the interior of this homely tenement was only partially illumined by

the lunar beam. When the Rohillah had reached the entrance he asked if any one was within, and receiving no answer stepped stealthily over the threshold. He had no sooner done this than a crease was buried in his breast. Before he could recover from his surprise, the blow was repeated, and he fell upon the floor streaming with blood. He had, however, seized the woman in his arms the moment he felt himself stabbed, and when he fell, dragged her upon him. Feeling that he was mortally wounded, he grasped his foe by the throat with desperate energy: she struggled to release herself in vain. The gripe was too determined for her feeble strength to relax it. The more she struggled, the fiercer was the dying man's resistance, and in a few minutes they both lay dead upon the floor clasped in each other's arms, their countenances distorted with the desperate throes under which they had mutually expired.

This is one of many facts which might be recorded of that fierce tribe, who, in the earlier periods of the Moghul supremacy, were a people of considerable political influence, the district they inhabited being very flourishing, and containing several cities of great importance, among which were Shahjehanabad, Bareily, Budayoon, Mooradabad, and Sambhul. The country is now subject to the King of Oude, who exercises over it a despotic dominion. It is at present in a state of most deplorable subjection; and though the fearless character of the people is not extinguished, their political resources are at this moment so few and feeble, that they cannot emancipate themselves from the state of feudal thraldom to which the sad chances of war

and their own numerous predal provocations have reduced them.

Rohilcund forms part of the modern province of Delhi, being situated east of the Ganges between the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth degrees of north latitude, and from 78° to 80° east longitude. The Rohillahs were formerly employed in the armies of adventurers whose ambition led them to contest against the lawful supremacy. They were always ready to enlist as mercenaries under any leader who would repay their services with liberal rewards. They have served with the Mahratta forces, when commanded by Holcar and the Scindias, having been always avowedly hostile to the British government, not because they consider it unjust or oppressive, but because under it they cannot exercise those propensities to plunder, and those habits of refractory violence by which they delight to distinguish themselves. They have a repugnance to the severe discipline enforced in the Company's armies, and therefore few of them enlist in a service which punishes robbery as a crime of the greatest enormity. They are generally an idle and dissolute people, loving those pursuits to which a dislike of occupation naturally inclines, and are consequently disposed to plunder whenever they can find the opportunity; nor are their consciences very tender about despatching the parties plundered, if it should appear a necessary measure of precaution. They will assemble round a brave but ferocious chief, and adhere to his fortunes with a fidelity and courage worthy of higher motives and more exalted aims. However desperate his circumstances, they are seldom known to desert or

betray him. The greater his depravity, if he be but resolute, the greater their fidelity; and he has only to lead them to plunder to secure their unqualified veneration.

The Rohillahs were originally an Afghan tribe, and still retain indelible marks of the stock from which they sprang. They are a remarkably fine race of men, tall and well favoured, compactly formed, having good expressive features, and complexions not darker than those of the inhabitants of Southern Europe. The Hindoo population of this district, though numerically equal to the Mohammedan, live in a state of wretched subserviency, having been deprived, by the intolerance of those by whom they have been subdued, of most of their temples, and forced to succumb to the oppression of men who consider law a tyranny, and consequently the violation of it no crime.

CHAPTER II.

About a hundred and fifty miles further up the river, and near its banks, are the ruins of old Delhi, covering an area of nearly twenty miles. Some of the buildings yet standing are of remarkable strength and beauty, the remains of mausoleums especially. Houses still continue entire without, though in a state of dilapidation within, which once belonged to Patan warriors and princes, and subsequently to their Moghul conquerors. Though suffering from the effects both of time and accident, they are nevertheless in good preservation, considering the utter neglect into which they have fallen for nearly two centuries. They have become the temporary abodes of robbers, who make them their occasional haunts until their depredations render expedient a hasty retreat to places more remote from populous neighbourhoods, and therefore of greater security.

Some of these buildings exhibit a very singular style of architecture, presenting a succession of square masses with arched windows, resembling the Saxon gothic, and rising like so many state-prisons from the plain, over which fragments of magnificent edifices are

strewed with so lavish a profusion, that the spectator may even now behold in these ruins the splendour of the once celebrated Indraprastha. The Patan buildings remaining at this time entire, are no less remarkable for their solidity than for their singularity of form; for they differ in a very striking degree from the architecture, both Hindoo and Mohammedan, of every other period, whether recent or remote. From the strength and simplicity of their structure, not being encumbered with decorative appendages, for they are generally without ornament, it is probable that in so favourable a climate they will yet stand for centuries, without sustaining much injury from atmospheric influence. The materials of which the external masonry of the plainer ruins is composed, are a hard compact granite, squared into large masses, and fitted with extreme accuracy. The roofs are terraced, being covered with a coarse stucco, so durable that it has scarcely been affected by time, and is calculated to resist the effects of the elements for ages, if we may judge from the slight impression hitherto made upon it.

The Patan architecture in India may always be known by its peculiar characteristics: it is mostly plain and unadorned, commonly made up of square forms and flat surfaces, which always unite the idea of stern simplicity with ponderous strength. The Afghan or Patan princes evinced much judgment and taste in the structures which they erected, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Delhi; but when those tribes were succeeded by the Tartar or Turkoman race, since erroneously denominated Moghuls, their style of

Drawn by T. Daniell R.A. Engraved by J. Landseer

Dowlet Hous of Patan Chief at Old Delhi

building was superseded by one much more gorgeous, and which exhibits at this moment in India some of the finest specimens of ornamental architecture upon the face of the globe.

The print represents the dwelling-house of a Patan chieftain who probably caroused in its spacious halls upwards of four centuries ago. The entrance is through a rather low but massy doorway, protected by two ponderous buttresses, and surmounted by a terrace covering a sort of vaulted arcade which runs at right angles from the main building, forming the boundary of a court, of considerable extent, which it helps to enclose. The terrace is flanked on either side by a parapet broken at rather long intervals into turrets; but the interstices are too narrow to admit the mounting of cannon, which were evidently not employed in Oriental warfare when those edifices were erected, though gunpowder is imagined by some to have been known in India long prior to its discovery in Europe. The windows have the pointed gothic arch, and above them there is a plain, heavy, but not ungraceful, pediment, supported by brackets, which favour the general aspect of solidity.

It is surprising how perfectly these ruins, even now, maintain that appearance of severe but dignified simplicity which characterised the people by whom they were erected. Those more immediately in the neighbourhood of the river, are the almost daily resort of travellers, who, notwithstanding the frequent propinquity of very equivocal neighbours, take up their temporary abodes in these deserted buildings, where they share with bats and creatures of less in-

noxious qualities, the undisputed possession of chambers in which princes or warriors once reposed and the pomp of nobility prevailed.

The buffalo may be daily seen bathing its heavy limbs in the water that washes the walls of those stately ruins; and the camel-driver leads his beast to the brink to release it of its burden beside the cool stream, in which it relieves itself with a refrigerating draught after a long and painful journey. Though these creatures carry in the stomach a provision of water sufficient for the consumption of several days, yet they are always anxious to exchange their confined store for the less heated element of the river or tank.

"In those caravans of long course," says Bruce in his travels, "which come from the Niger across the Desert of Selima, it is said that each camel, by drinking, lays in a store of water that will support him for forty days. I will by no means be a voucher for the truth of this account, which carries with it an air of exaggeration; but fourteen or sixteen days, it is well known, an ordinary camel will live, though he hath no fresh supply of water. When he chews the cud, or when he eats, you constantly see him throw from his repository mouthfuls of water to dilute his food; and Nature has contrived this vessel with such properties, that the water within never putrifies nor turns unwholesome. It was indeed vapid, but had neither taste nor smell."

The length of time which Mr. Bruce represents camels to live without a fresh supply of water, would appear altogether incredible had not the extraordinary fact been confirmed by subsequent travellers. When

their stock is exhausted, they suffer dreadfully ; but being endowed with the faculty of perceiving when water is within a certain distance, either by an exquisite keenness of scent, or some unknown power of perception peculiar to them, they hurry forward with extreme activity and fill their receptacles, without suffering much inconvenience from the temporary suspension.

The deserted buildings among the ruins of old Delhi, are, as I have said, the occasional haunts of robbers, who take possession of them until they are obliged by the native law-authorities, sufficiently lax, however, in their functions generally, to abandon them for more remote retreats. At the beginning of the present century, the whole province of Delhi, and especially that part of it which forms the modern division of Moradabad, swarmed with robbers ; these used to prowl the country in numerous and well organised bands, headed by some desperate chieftain who was the terror of the whole district. The daring leaders, who might rather be termed rebels than robbers, had so entire an ascendency over their followers, that the latter never betrayed them, but almost invariably stood by them to the last extremity. Those formidable bands of depredators set the ordinary native police establishments at defiance, and such was their power, that the law-functionaries were afraid to interfere with them ; they consequently pursued their depredations with comparative impunity. They were regularly confederated, and the supreme authority descended from father to son, unless some great disqualification rendered the latter unfit to succeed, when the choice commonly fell

upon the next of kin esteemed most worthy to undertake so desperate a command. Many of these gangs of desperadoes were well mounted; and upon one occasion, a body of regular troops, commanded by British officers, was successfully resisted by a detachment of those predatory hordes. With a much smaller number they cut their way through the sepoy ranks, and effected their retreat in spite of the vigilance and activity of their enemies, who had been despatched into the province of Moradabad, for the purpose of apprehending them. Those plunderers were so well acquainted with the jungles, that when pursued, they plunged into their deepest recesses, where a regular force was unable to follow them; and being familiar with the different fords of the rivers, they often came upon their enemies when least expected, and having thrown them into confusion, occasionally slaughtered great numbers with scarcely any loss to their own party. The inhabitants were so intimidated by their repeated successes in this way, that they could not be induced to act against foes so formidable, and whose ferocious retaliation they greatly dreaded.

About five or six and twenty years ago, one of these clans of robbers amounted to upwards of four hundred; and it is commonly known in India how soon a well-organised force of this description may be augmented in districts where the idle and profligate abound, ready to unite with any party who will lead them to plunder, with no other impediment than the chance of fighting for it.

"The Rohillah insurgents," says Bishop Heber,*

* Journal, vol. ii. pp, 120, 1, 2.

" are usually very faithful to each other; and as in Oude there is neither police nor pursuit, it seldom happens, if they once escape, that they can be laid hold of afterwards. One of the most notorious of them, who had long eluded justice, came into the hands of government not long since, under very singular circumstances. He had passed over into Oude and bought a Zemindarrie there, which was last year seized on, under circumstances of excessive injustice, by the servants of the favorite, who at the same time carried off one of his wives. The Zemindar, equally high-spirited and desperate with Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh under similar circumstances, rode immediately to Lucknow, scaled, with the assistance of his servants, the wall of the minister's private garden, and waited there, well armed but alone, till his enemy should make his appearance. The minister did not himself appear, but his two youngest sons came out to walk with their ayahs.* The Rohillah knew them, pounced upon them like a tiger, and holding them between his knees, told the terrified women to go and call their master. The palace was soon in an uproar, but he sat still, with his back against the wall, the infants under his kness, and a pistol in each hand, calling out, 'Draw near and they are both dead.' The minister wept and tore his flesh, promising him everything if he would let them go; to which he answered, 'The restoration of my wife, my own safety, and the guarantee of the British resident for both.' The woman was immediately brought out, and the minister went, like one frantic, to the residency,

* Native nurses.

begging for God's sake either Mr. Ricketts or Major Raper to go with him. The latter went, and the Rohillah, after a horrible pause, in which he seemed still to be weighing the sweetness of revenge against the promises held out to him, rose, took his wife by the hand, and led her away. He was not, however, satisfied with the security of his continuance in Oude, but soon after surrendered himself to the British, saying that he knew he must look forward to a confinement for some time, but he preferred their severities to the tender mercies of the minister, who, in spite of his promise, had, he was convinced, already laid snares for him. He is now a prisoner in the castle of Allahabad, but it is generally believed that he has made his peace, and that his confinement will not be a long one, though his offences before were serious enough, and though it would be a strange reason for pardoning him that he had been about to kill the two children of the prime minister of an allied power."

The Rohillahs are generally not only a fierce and intractable, but also a cruel and treacherous people. In perfidy they are not outdone by the very lowest classes among the Hindoos, with whom this vice is common to a proverb. That there are, however, some exceptions, the exceptions nevertheless proving the rule, may be gathered from a story current in the neighbourhood of Moradabad prior to the suppression of the Dacoit gangs in that province, during the first decade of the present century.

A European sergeant having deserted from his regiment stationed at Cawnpoor, directed his route towards Delhi, hiding himself in the jungles by day, and pur-

suing his journey by night through a country with which he was utterly unacquainted. One morning, just as he had thrown himself under the shade of a tree, to take a few hours sleep after the fatigue of a long night's march, he heard the sound of voices in earnest conversation, and upon listening attentively, was soon satisfied that persons were approaching the place of his concealment. He was much perplexed, knowing that no mere traveller would penetrate so deeply into the recesses of the forest. He concluded, therefore, that the parties approaching must be robbers. The tree beneath which he had taken shelter being low, but the foliage remarkably thick, he immediately resolved to climb it until the strangers should pass and leave him to his repose upon the grass beneath. He was scarcely seated among the branches when he perceived through the interstices of the luxuriant foliage two men approaching, through a vista of the wood, the spot which he had just quitted. Having reached this, they threw themselves under the tree, and one of them, being armed with a matchlock, the fusee of which was burning, lighted his cocoanut hookah, which he took from a sort of wallet carried by his companion, and began to smoke. For some time the strangers continued silent, as if unwilling to abstract their thoughts from the narcotic luxury which they were then mutually enjoying, for each took alternately a whiff from the tube until the chillam was exhausted. They now entered into conversation with considerable volubility, and the soldier overhead listened with intense anxiety, eager to catch every word of their discourse.

"Don't you observe," said one, who seemed much superior to the other, by whom he was treated with a certain rude deference which denoted conscious inferiority, "that something has been here before us? The grass is crushed. This is not the pressure of a creature with four legs. It looks more like the form of a man than of a wild beast. Who should have been here, so deep in the heart of the jungle, which we, with all our knowledge of its lurking-places, have not penetrated until now? If he really turn out to be a traveller who has lost his way, and we pounce upon him, he may take the last tender leave of his gold mohurs, for, by the Prophet's beard, he and they shall part company."

"I think," replied his companion, "it must be a bear who has been basking here in the morning light, and hearing our voices, preferred changing his quarters to encountering a matchlock."

"Bears don't lie so lightly: the grass has been pressed, I suspect, by a smoother carcass, and we shall no doubt fall in with it before the sun shuts his bright eyes on this fair world to-night. I fancy we shall have more gratification at making his acquaintance, than he at making ours; because in proportion as we shall be gainers he must be a loser, and money is never parted with joyously."

"Though he should not give it with a good will, we shall be none the poorer; so long as we clutch it, who cares whether it be taken courteously, or a blow on the head precedes the ceremony."

"True, your tributaries, whether of governments who levy by law, or of good people like ourselves who

levy against law, are never voluntary paymasters. It must be taken, for they will never give; we are, however, expert and resolute toll-gatherers. But if we don't start forward with a lusty speed," he continued, suddenly rising, "we shall miss our tributary, and thus forfeit the reward of a whole day's activity. Let us on, and with our knowledge of the forest-tracks it will be hard if we don't dodge a stray sheep who doesn't know that he has wandered into the lair of the wolf. We 'll strip him of his burden, and then as a compensation show him the way into the sun-light."

They now quitted the spot where they had held this significant dialogue, taking a narrow path which here diverged from the straight line, and were soon lost to sight amid the thick growth of the forest.

The soldier descended from his concealment, determined not to quit the spot until the sun should have nearly reached the western line of the horizon. He felt anything but secure in a place where he might be intruded upon without a moment's notice by such unceremonious visitors. Being at length, however, overcome with extreme fatigue, he threw himself at the foot of the tree, and was soon lapped in profound slumber. He slept for several hours, and upon waking found, to his great satisfaction, that his forest sanctuary had not been invaded. Having refreshed himself with some cold rice cake, and a small quantity of arrack copiously diluted with water, he proceeded, guided by a pocket compass, towards Delhi. Being utterly unacquainted with the numerous intricacies of the forest, his progress was extremely slow and difficult.

The deserter, notwithstanding the numerous impediments against which he had to contend, resolutely pursued his journey through the night, and towards morning approached a small hamlet nearly in the centre of an extensive plain. Upon reaching it, he found the houses in a state of miserable dilapidation, and completely deserted. Famine had depopulated this perhaps once flourishing and populous village. The melancholy silence which prevailed as he passed through the street, now overgrown with rank wiry grass, brought to his mind the painful consciousness of desolation and of death. Ere he gained the extremity of the one long avenue, flanked with the ruins of deserted habitations on either side, he was greeted with the loud abrupt bark of a Pariah dog. The creature was gaunt and lean as a half-famished wolf. Its head and back were scaled with mange, and it looked altogether a monstrous and disgusting incarnation of misery.

As the sergeant advanced, the animal turned and slunk into a ruined building, the entrance to which was greatly dilapidated. He followed into the murky ruin. Upon the floor sat a small meagre figure, apparently in a sort of rapt abstraction. By his side was a pitcher of water, and a platter on which was some cold boiled rice dotted with green chilis. He was a perfect living skeleton: every muscle and fibre,—in short, the whole superficial mechanism of the macerated machine was as apparent to the eye as if it had been laid bare by the dissecting knife and scalpel of the anatomist. His features seemed to have shrunk from the skin, which was puckered over them in a

variety of uneven folds, so entirely breaking the natural lines of his countenance as to give the aspect of almost hideous deformity. His eyes, which were open to their utmost extremity, had a stern unnatural glare, that recalled to the beholder's mind those fictions of unearthly objects and "chimeras dire," which used to encumber the legendary lore of the middle and chivalric ages. The dog had placed itself at the feet of this object of pitiable humanity, to which it seemed to bear not indeed a cognate but sympathetic relation; and resting its head between its swelled and tuberclous paws, whined piteously, as if to excite the sympathy of the stranger. Wearied with his journey, the soldier passed towards a narrow opening which led into a small apartment, and without disturbing the reverie of the venerable man whose privacy he had from necessity invaded, he wrapped himself in a coarse rug which he carried for that purpose, and in a few minutes was in a state of happy unconsciousness.

CHAPTER III.

About noon the soldier awoke from a refreshing sleep, and upon rising found the old man seated before the door of his miserable dwelling; his eyes were raised towards the sun, that was pouring its fiery beams upon his naked head, upon which a single lock rising from the crown, grey, lank, and withered, indicated his caste to be the highest. As the deserter had assumed the costume of the country, in order the more effectually to elude pursuit and evade discovery, the venerable zealot, who was nearly blind from age, was not aware of the propinquity of an object supposed to impart contamination to the very atmosphere within the influence of a Brahmin's respiration. When, therefore, the stranger invaded the privacy of this senile fanatic, the latter had not questioned the propriety of his intrusion, knowing that no native of inferior caste would have dared to violate by his presence the abode of Brahminical sanctity; but when the intruder appeared at the door of the dwelling which he had so unceremoniously appropriated, and announced himself to be a faringhee, or christian in disguise, the old man seemed in a moment to have obtained new life. He started from the ground,

staggered into the house, and fell prostrate upon the floor, which his shrivelled hands had just smeared with fresh cow-dung, the great medium of purification among the Hindoos. The Englishman raised him, seated him upon an old piece of hair-cloth which lay upon the floor, supporting his back against the wall. For some time it appeared as if the tongue had become paralysed: the saliva oozed from the corners of his mouth, the lips quivered, and the teeth occasionally gnashed slightly against each other, but he spoke not. After a while he said faintly, and with an expression of extreme anxiety, "Go! go!"

The soldier retired a short distance, and impatiently awaited the aged devotee's recovery. After an interval of some length, the latter spoke in an accent of calm but rather severe reproof, upbraiding the soldier with his intrusion upon the sacred privacy of a Brahmin. The intruder told him a pitiful story of oppression, that he had been forced to quit his regiment in consequence of the tyranny of his commanding officer, imploring the Hindoo to direct him on his way to Delhi, where he thought he should be secure from pursuit for the moment. The old Brahmin was somewhat subdued by the earnestness of this appeal, and soon grew more familiarised to the stranger's presence. It appeared from his own statement that he was a Yogue or Hindoo saint, whose character for sanctity was celebrated throughout the neighbouring country. He was continually visited as an object of deserved veneration by the ignorant and besotted inhabitants of the neighbouring hamlets, who brought him supplies of food from their own homely store, and which,

as he was living in a state of voluntary penance, far better became his spiritual condition than the pampering luxuries in which the generality of his caste too commonly indulged. Though bigoted in the last degree, he still was not without humanity, and gave his uninvited guest all the information he required, putting him in the best way to make the shortest journey to the place of his destination. The deserter made an effort to persuade him to abandon his recluse and miserable life, and take up his abode with such among his kindred as would receive him gladly.

"No," he replied; "I have nearly summed up the amount of my days, and I came here to die. I have but one wish in this world, and that is when my spirit shall be released from this withered trunk, that the frame which enshrined it here be committed to those sacred waters which shall bear it to the gates of the eternal paradise."

The soldier quitted the Yogue with a sigh of compassion at the moral degradation to which a fanatical superstition had reduced a naturally humane but morbid mind. He proceeded towards the place of his destination with the utmost despatch, travelling by night and hiding himself in thickets during the day. There was, however, little chance of his being discovered, as none of his own countrymen were to be found in the districts through which he passed, except at some of the towns near the banks of the Jumna; and the natives could have no motive for betraying him even should they be aware that he was a deserter. He suffered greatly from constant exposure to the weather in a climate to which he was

not perfectly seasoned. The skin peeled from his face, and left it so raw that he could not bear the least contact with the irritated flesh, which inflamed and became exceedingly painful. He was seized with dysentery; this confined him three days to the jungle, where he luckily found refuge in the hovel of a charcoal-burner. Here he was at least protected from the influence of the night air, though not from the unwholesome malaria of the thicket.

Being supplied with medicines, for in India few persons travel without them, the fugitive administered the ordinary remedies with some success. The violence of his symptoms abated, though the complaint was not subdued, and he was still extremely weak, even when able to travel. The hospitality of the poor Hindoo had been signal and timely; and the reward of three rupees made him a happy man, as it supplied him with the means of at least a month's subsistence.

It was not without great difficulty that the deserter could proceed: his weakness was extreme, but his energies were roused by the consciousness of his equivocal position, and he hurried forward in spite of the weakness which oppressed his frame. With much difficulty he reached the plains of Delhi, where he determined to remain at least until sufficiently recovered to change his place of retreat should circumstances render it advisable. He selected a handsome-looking house among the ruins, apparently entire, and which he hoped would furnish every necessary accommodation to a man who sought security from pursuit rather than the easy comforts of a home. It was, no doubt, a Patan structure, in tolerably good preserva-

tion without, but in a state of much greater dilapidation within. The chambers were spacious though cheerless, and their aspect of utter desolation rather repelled than invited confidence in their security from peril; for throughout the East, deserted buildings are almost invariably the abodes either of beasts of prey or of those venomous reptiles with whom too near a proximity is no less dangerous. Having scraped together a quantity of dried leaves and sticks which were scattered among the ruins, by igniting some powder in the pan of a pistol, he kindled a fire in a small chamber, to which there was an ascent by a short flight of stone steps, much broken, and in many places the flat surface of the stair was greatly encumbered with rubbish.

The external appearance of the building to which the soldier had retired, was sufficiently imposing, and something more ornamented than the subject presented in the preceding engraving, which represents a specimen of the architecture of this period, amid the ruins of the once imperial Indraprastha. Although probably a Patan structure, it was much more decorated than the buildings imputed to the Afghan races, and surmounted by domes and minarets at the angles, the former, marked into segments, rising above a terraced roof, covered with coarse stucco, as in the former instance.

The towers, abutting upon the plain from the angles of the front facing the water, were embellished with plain columns rising from a turreted base, and supporting a parapet, within which rose a dome of considerable magnitude. The façade intervening

betwixt these towers was embellished with a projecting parapet corresponding with the pinnacled bases of the towers. Beneath this was a gloomy arcade, from which were numerous entrances into the building. The whole exterior was covered with the same material as that used in the structure already described, but of finer quality, presenting a clear, hard, and beautiful surface.

The deserter, who had with a few lengths of split bamboo, which he had tied together to serve the purpose of a broom, swept the apartment selected by him for his temporary abode, threw his rug in the corner, and prepared to compose himself to sleep. He was still extremely weak, and though his complaint had considerably remitted, it continued to cause him much distress. The fire which he had kindled, to his sore vexation and annoyance, drew several scorpions and centipedes from their holes, and he was occupied for some time in slaughtering these insidious enemies before he could venture to lie down to rest in security. After having refreshed himself with a few hours' sleep, he threw off his rug, when he found a cobra de capella snake coiled up close to his breast, attracted no doubt by the warmth ; it had glided into its new retreat while he was asleep, and remained there, fortunately without being disturbed by the movements of the sleeper. It now lifted its sleek dark head, its bright eyes sparkling like two diamonds, and passing its tongue between its lips glided over the soldier's body into a corner of the apartment, whither he pursued and despatched it with a small native cimetar.

In this retreat the fugitive passed the day, subsisting upon the fare of the poor Hindoos—boiled rice saturated with ghee. He had forty gold mohurs, which he kept tied up in a muslin belt round his waist; these he had purloined from the pay-sergeant of his company previously to his desertion. During the night his slumbers were disturbed by the sound of voices in the chamber beneath; and his attentive ear soon distinguished those of the very men to whom he had listened with such trembling anxiety from the tree in the jungle, whither he had sought refuge from discovery. Immediately ascertaining that they were informed of his presence, he determined without further delay to make his appearance, and endeavour to win their confidence and kind treatment by a frank behaviour and a seeming reliance upon their good intentions. He had no sooner come to this determination than he descended into the lower apartment, where he found four men; among these were the two whom he had already seen in the forest. He at once told them that he had sought refuge from oppression in the same ruin whither they had retired for other purposes; and mentioned the circumstance of his escape in the thicket by climbing a tree, in order the more effectually to enlist their better feelings in his behalf, by assuming that air of communicativeness which betokens an utter absence of suspicion of evil intentions on the part of those who are the objects of such apparently ready reliance.

The robbers, for such they evidently were, received his communication favourably; but one of these seemed to eye him with a sinister scowl, which be-

tokened no friendly intentions towards him: their chief, however, who was not to be mistaken, put him at his ease by his frank and ready offer of protection. The Rohillah was a remarkably well-made man, compactly muscular, under the middle age, full of vigour and activity, with a clear, steady eye, which betokened a resolute and undaunted character. The robber who had attracted the deserter's attention by his unfamiliar manner and repulsive aspect, had that lowering and downcast look which seemed to tell you there was an apprehension lest the expression of his eye should betray the lurking treachery of his thoughts.

"Well," said the chief, "assure yourself of protection in this retreat; it is not our practice to assail the distressed. We are robbers, and though plunder is our aim, we prefer stripping the lazy of their ill-gotten treasure, than the industrious of their hard-earned pittance. You might have revealed yourself in the jungle without scruple; you would have been as safe with us there as here."

"I knew not," said the soldier, "that robbers were in the habit of making distinctions; I had taken up the erroneous persuasion that wherever money could be had, they did not scruple to seize it; and though mine is but a mere mite, the loss of it, nevertheless, would reduce me to complete destitution, and be of little benefit to you."

The eye of the sinister robber seemed to kindle when he heard the Englishman confess that he had money; for he no doubt suspected, and, if he did so, he suspected truly, that a deserter would not quit his

quarters unless with a sufficient stock of rupees to provide those necessaries, without which no man could pass through a strange country.

At night the Christian was allowed to retain the small apartment he had previously chosen as his dormitory; and though when he retired he had some misgivings of safety, he soon fell into a tranquil sleep. He was shortly awoke by a hand grasping the girdle which contained his gold mohurs. A rude lamp, consisting of a small earthenware jar, in which a wick of cotton burned through cocoanut-oil floating on water, threw a dim livid light through the chamber. Upon finding himself thus assailed, the soldier sprang from his couch, grappled with the robber, who, however, instantly slipped from his hold, and inflicted a severe wound on his shoulder with a knife. The chief, hearing the scuffle, rushed into the apartment, and perceiving the cause, drew a dagger from his girdle, buried it in the breast of his companion without uttering a word, and laid him dead at his feet.

"You see," said he to the Englishman, "how robbers can punish treachery, even among their associates. I promised you protection, and will keep my word. Have no fears: while I live, you are safe."

The body of the man who had been killed was thrown among some ruins at a short distance, where it soon became a prey to the jackals and vultures. The soldier thus timely rescued from destruction was prevailed upon, after some hesitation, to take the place of the slain bandit. Balancing the peril of his present situation, he thought that by uniting himself

with a band of resolute fellows, who were generally well provided with money from plunder, he should certainly better his condition, and remain the more secure from discovery. If he were taken back to the regiment, he knew he should be shot; and it therefore seemed to him the least of two evils to hazard his life in the attempt to obtain wealth, rather than run the risk of forfeiting it for having violated the articles of war: he consequently placed himself under the command of the Rohillah chief, who mustered, when occasion called all his associates together, a band of seventy followers, ready to accompany him wherever he might choose to lead them, however desperate the enterprize.

When it was considered no longer prudent to remain in their present retreat, where some successful robberies had been committed, to the considerable augmentation of the deserter's store, they quitted the Patan ruin, and retraced their steps towards Rohilcund, in the jungles of which they would be more secure from the vigilance of judicial authorities. The soldier continued to assume the costume of the party with whom he had associated himself, and it would have been found a matter of no ordinary difficulty to detect him in such a disguise. Upon passing through the village where he had encountered the Yogue, as already stated, he found the old man as usual at the door of his miserable abode, with his eyes fixed upon the sun, and muttering his daily mantras* to the wooden or stony god of his barbarous idolatry. The Englishman deposited a few rupees in his withered

* Mantras are certain forms of prayer.

palm; these the holy man clutched as if they had been drops from the Amreeta cup.*

In due time the party of plunderers had taken post in the Kemaoon hills, which bound Rohilcund on the north, whence they made their incursions into the plains with signal success. The soldier amassed considerable treasure in a short time, and this reconciled him to the lawless course of life into which desertion had plunged him. He was, indeed, continually exposed to peril; but the meed sweetened both the toil and the danger of acquisition. For upwards of two years he continued with the Rohillahs, and was a great favourite with the chief, having abjured his own religious creed, and embraced that of the robbers. This was no doubt an act of interested policy. The day, however, of retribution came. He was cut off in a foray by a strong party of the Company's troops, the chief, and most of his band, being killed. Shortly after this, the rest were assailed in the hills, where they had entrenched themselves, and cut off to a man.

* The cup of which confers immortality when quaffed by the Hindoo elect.

CHAPTER IV.

In the neighbourhood of old buildings, remote from human habitations, snakes of all descriptions abound, and the porcupine is frequently seen. Sometimes the huge boa constrictor glides over the disjointed masses in search of prey, which it instinctively knows to take refuge in such localities, where man seldom ventures to intrude.

The boa constrictor is the largest of the serpent genus. The marvellous power and dimensions ascribed to this snake by travellers would transcend belief, were not those facts sufficiently authenticated; though even now doubts are entertained of this creature exceeding the length of forty feet. But there can be no just reason why the truth of the account of Suetonius should be questioned, who mentions, that in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, a prodigious snake was exhibited during one of the public shows, which measured twenty-five yards in length, when the immense size of these creatures has been so fully confirmed by the observations of modern travellers. That a snake of thirty, or even forty feet long should have so appalled the whole Roman army under Regulus, as to have kept his soldiers from approaching the river

Bagrada, near which they were encamped, is scarcely to be credited; and yet this fact is recorded by Livy the historian. It was finally destroyed by huge stones flung from the balistæ. Pliny in some measure confirms the account, by stating that the skin, which had been sent to Rome, and deposited in one of the temples, was to be seen until the time of the Numantine war. The body of the boa is covered with scuta or plates; these protect it from being wounded by the branches of trees which it climbs, and the rough projections of stones in ruins, where it often delights to hide itself, but are not sufficiently strong to resist the stroke of a sabre or hatchet, like the better-protected back of the alligator or crocodile. The stomach is in some instances sufficiently capacious to contain the carcass of a buffalo entire. When not gorged, this huge reptile is frequently as large as the body of a full-sized man. Its colour is of a dusky white, the back being distinctly marked with large spots, which cover it irregularly in the form of a chain, becoming darker towards the tail, and paler towards the belly, which is speckled with patches of vivid brown. The general hue of the skin over which those coloured variegations are distributed is of a yellowish grey.

The whole upper surface of the body is thickly interspersed with large dots of brown, which subside gradually from a dusky red tinge into a deep chesnut. The head is protected by very small scales, and has a large funnel-shaped mark running from the neck to the nostril, overspreading about a third of the skull. A black belt passes between the eyes, which are placed very near the mouth, and are

so intensely brilliant that no animal can meet their gaze without terror. The skull rises considerably just above their sockets, where it becomes broad and flat, but is slightly rounded at the extremity, where it slopes off into the neck. The jaws, though armed with sharp strong teeth, are not furnished with the large dog-fangs. As the food of these creatures never undergoes the process of mastication, everything being swallowed by them entire, they require neither incisor nor molar teeth, being merely provided with the means of securing their prey after they have seized it. When one of these snakes has taken a buffalo, or other large animal, the mode of destroying its victim is by crushing it within the voluminous coil of its tail, which it twists round the body of its writhing prey, and by the vast strength of its muscles breaks every bone, finally reducing the whole substance to a long shapeless mass, which it covers with a saliva abundantly secreted about the fauces, and then, by an effort of gradual deglutition, finally deposits it within its capacious stomach.

When gorged the boa lays in a state of torpor until by natural depletion its wonted activity is restored; it then repeats the monstrous meal, and under the influence of the satiety which invariably follows its gluttony, it may be easily destroyed, being utterly incapable of resistance of any kind.

In some parts of India the skins of those creatures are used for ornamental cloths on account of their uncommon beauty; and as these are extremely rare, they are valued in proportion. Like the alligator, the boa is an object of great veneration; but this

probably arises more from the terror than from the love it inspires. When lying in wait for prey, these snakes are remarkably wary, and no less active in seizing it when sufficiently near. They frequently suspend themselves by the tail from one of the upper branches of a large tree, dropping with the velocity of a thunderbolt upon sheep, goats, buffaloes, men, and even tigers, or indeed on any animal, save the elephant or rhinoceros, which may chance to come within their reach. They have been occasionally seen with the horns of a stag projecting from their jaws. As the body digests, the horns are said to rot and fall off, and thus the creature is released from its unwelcome incumbrance.

When irritated, the boa hisses so loudly that it can be heard at a very considerable distance, and the sweep of its tail is so formidable, that young trees, and even the stiff stems of the knotted bamboo, fall beneath the stroke as if cut down by the shot of a cannon. In North America, it is said that the natives, when pursued by this formidable reptile, set fire to the long dry grass, and the flames immediately spreading check the further progress of the monster, which retires before the devouring element. The Indians will frequently attack and kill them, though this is at all times an enterprise of exceeding peril.

"Captain Stedman," says Mr. Wood in his Zoography, "during his residence in Surinam, assisted by his negro, was bold enough to shoot one of these gigantic snakes, which measured twenty-two feet seven inches, although the natives declared it to be a young one. The account which Captain Stedman

has given of the transaction being interesting, we shall relate it nearly in his own words. As he was resting in his hammock, while the vessel in which he was, floated down the river, the sentinel told him that he had seen and challenged something black and moving in the brushwood on the beach, which gave no answer, but which from its size he concluded must be a man. The captain immediately manned the canoe which accompanied his vessel, and rowed on shore to ascertain what it was; when, to his great surprise, one of his slaves declared it was no negro, but a large amphibious snake, and that he might shoot it if he pleased. To this, however, it seems Stedman had not the least inclination, and therefore ordered all of them to return on board. The negro then begged leave to step forward and shoot it himself, as he was certain it could not be far off, and assured his master that there would be no danger.

'This declaration,' says Captain Stedman, 'inspired me with so much pride and emulation, that I determined to take his first advice, and kill it myself, provided he would point it out to me, and be responsible for the hazard by standing at my side; from which I swore, if he dared to move, I would level the piece at himself, and blow out his own brains.

'To this the negro cheerfully agreed; and having loaded my gun with a ball cartridge, we proceeded, David cutting a path with a bill-hook, and a marine following with three more loaded firelocks to keep in readiness. We had not gone more than twenty yards through mud and water, the negro looking every way with an uncommon degree of vivacity and

attention, when, starting behind me, he called out, 'Me see snakee!' and in effect there lay the animal, rolled up under the fallen leaves and rubbish of the trees; and so well covered, that it was some time before I distinctly perceived the head of the monster, distant from me not above sixteen feet, moving its forked tongue, while its eyes, from their uncommon brightness, appeared to emit sparks of fire. I now rested my piece upon a branch for the purpose of taking a surer aim, and fired, but missing the head the ball went through the body, when the animal struck round, and with such astonishing force as to cut away all the underwood around him with the facility of a scythe mowing grass, and by flouncing his tail caused the mud and dirt to fly over our heads to a considerable distance. Of this proceeding, however, we were not torpid spectators, but took to our heels and crowded into the canoe.

'The negro now entreated me to renew the charge, assuring me the snake would be quiet in a few minutes; and at any rate persisted in the assertion that he was neither able nor inclined to pursue us, which opinion he supported by walking before me till I should be ready to fire. And thus I again undertook to make the trial; especially as he said that his first starting backwards was only to make room for me. I now found the snake a little removed from his former station, but very quiet, with his head, as before, lying out among the fallen leaves, rotten bark, and old moss. I fired at it immediately, but with no better success than the other time; and now being

but slightly wounded, he sent up such a cloud of dust and dirt as I never saw but in a whirlwind, and made us once more suddenly retreat to our canoe; where now, being heartily tired of the exploit, I gave orders to row towards the barge: but David, still entreating me to permit him to kill the animal, I was, by his persuasions, induced to make a third and last attempt in company with him. Then, having once more discovered the snake, we discharged both our pieces at once, and with this good effect, that he was now by one of us shot through the head.'

"Captain Stedman, with the help of his servants, now secured the snake, by passing a rope with a running noose upon it over his head. This was effected with some difficulty, as the animal, notwithstanding his being mortally wounded, still continued to writhe and twist about in such a manner as to render it dangerous for any person to approach him. In this state he was dragged to the shore, and the end of the rope made fast to the canoe in order to tow him to the vessel. According to Stedman's account, he continued swimming like an eel until they arrived on board; where, upon due consideration, it was agreed to convey this immense snake once more on shore, and have him skinned for the sake of the oil. In order to effect this purpose, the negro David, having climbed a tree with the end of the rope, let it down over a strong forked bough, and the other negros hoisted up the snake, and suspended him from the tree. This done, David, with a sharp knife between his teeth, now left the tree and clung fast upon

the monster, which was still twisting, and began his operation by ripping it up and stripping down the skin as he descended.

'Though I perceived,' continues Stedman, 'that the animal was no longer able to do him any injury, I confess I could not without emotion see a man stark naked, black and bloody, clinging with arms and legs round the slimy and yet living monster. This labour, however, was not without its use, since he not only dexterously finished the operation, but provided me, besides the skin, with above four gallons of fine clarified fat, or rather oil, though there was wasted perhaps as much more.'

"The adventure was finally concluded by the negroes, who cut the flesh of the snake into pieces on purpose to dress it: from which they were deterred by the captain, who would not allow them to eat such disgusting food, notwithstanding their declaration that it was exceedingly good and wholesome.

"This monstrous snake," continues Mr. Wood, "when he has fasted for any length of time, becomes most actively voracious, and springs with inconceivable rapidity upon the unfortunate animal who comes within his reach. However large the animal may be, his doom is fixed, and the power of flight denied him. He is confined within the folds of the snake's enormous tail: who, contracting the muscles of his body in proportion to the resistance to be overcome, crushes the wretched victim in pieces, and then, covering the carcass with saliva, sucks it by degrees into his stomach. In this manner one of the largest of the species has been said to manage a buffalo; and

we are shocked to add that there is an instance upon record of a human being who fell a sacrifice to one of these monsters. A man belonging to a Malay prow, which had anchored for the night close to the Island of Celebes, went on shore to look for betel nut, and on his return is supposed to have gone to sleep upon the beach. In the middle of the night his screams were heard by the people in the vessel, who immediately went on shore; but, alas! they came too late, their comrade was crushed to death by a monstrous snake; and all the satisfaction they could derive was to revenge his death by killing his enemy, whose head they cut off, and carried, together with the body of the man, on board their boat. The marks of the fangs were imprinted upon the man's right wrist; and the corpse, though disfigured, bore evident signs of having been crushed by the monster's twisting himself round the head, neck, breast, and thigh. The snake measured about thirty feet; and when the jaws were extended they admitted a body the size of a man's head."*

Mr. Wood has evidently written with great caution upon this subject, as if distrusting the accounts given by travellers of the extraordinary size of the boa; but there is no reason to doubt that this reptile very much exceeds the length given to it by modern naturalists. It is universally admitted that the boa is the largest of all the serpent tribe; and the large pimbereh, a snake, I believe, peculiar to the fenny tracts of Ceylon, which is not a boa, has been occasionally found to measure upwards of thirty feet;

* Wood's Zoography, vol. ii.

but as it will be evident that the dimensions of the larger species of snake must exceed those of the smaller, thirty feet will be a limitation far too narrow against existing testimonies, both ancient and modern, in favour of the occasionally prodigious size of the boa constrictor.

The porcupine is now an inhabitant of all the four continents, and everywhere a very harmless creature. It is armed with prickles, like the hedgehog, which are nearly as long as a goose-quill, and full as thick, and these prove its defence against its natural enemies. When attacked, it places its head between its legs, curves its tail under its belly, and erecting its quills, presents every where an array of pointed bristles to the assaulting foe. This animal has eight grinders besides two fore-teeth, which are obliquely divided both in the upper and under jaw. It is about the size of a small terrier dog, being usually, when full grown, from twenty-two to twenty-six inches long, and thirty inches high. The upper lip is separated like that of a hare; it has a crested head, a stunted tail, with five toes on the hind feet, and four only on the fore. The spines on the back are exceedingly sharp, and marked with alternations of white and black annular lines from the root to the point. These weapons are loose in the skin, being fixed in a socket, like the horn of the rhinoceros, a muscle or ligament being attached to each quill; by this process the animal has the power, if irritated, of erecting its bristly arms, which are sufficiently stiff and strong when thus raised to resist the attacks of dogs, wolves, and large snakes; the latter of which

The Porcupine

are its most formidable enemies. When excited, the porcupine stamps upon the ground, and before it stiffens its quills rattles them with great violence, shakes its tail, and then rolls itself up into a ball, like the common hedgehog.

The common notion that this animal has the power of projecting its darts, like so many arrows, against an advancing foe, is a vulgar error. When violently assaulted, some of these defensive weapons, which from age or use had become completely dislocated or disunited from the attaching ligament, occasionally fall from the skin; but it was ascertained by Buffon, after repeated experiments, that the creature possessed not the power of elancing its quills, which are a permanent defence, and in general a most efficient one.

There are five species of this animal, the hystrix cristata, or crested porcupine; the dorsata, the macroura, the mexicana, and the prehensilis. The first is the animal just described. The dorsata is an inhabitant of North America as high as Hudson's Bay. It is about the size of the crested species, but its prickles are very short, like those of the hedgehog, only covering the back, and are almost hidden by the long hair which grows thickly betwixt them. The Indians stick them through their ears and the cartilages of the nose, in order to make holes for the large rings and other ornaments with which they adorn, but more frequently distort, those features. They wear them besides for various ornamental purposes, making them into very elegant fringes, with which they trim the edges of their deer-skin mantles. These animals feed chiefly on fruits, and are considered by

the native inhabitants of the country as affording very delicate food.

The macroura differs chiefly from the cristata in having a long tail, and the same number of toes, that number being five, on the hind and fore feet. They are found chiefly in the forests of the islands of the Indian archipelago.

The mexicana is found in the mountains of Mexico, where it is frequently caught and tamed by the Indians for the sake of its quills, which are supposed by them to contain great medicinal virtues. When reduced to powder, they are used as a specific for gravel, and are said, when applied whole to the forehead, to relieve the most intense headache. This animal grows nearly to the size of a pointer dog, having bristles mixed with the hair on its back, which latter is a fine soft down. It differs much from the first-named species, is perfectly harmless in its wild state, and very easily tamed.

The prehensilis or Brasilian porcupine, is the smallest of all the races. It has a long tail, the legs and body being covered with fine brown hair. It sleeps in the day like the hedgehog, and at night goes in quest of its food, which consists chiefly of birds and small animals. It is the fiercest of the five species, and less easily tamed than either.

"The porcupine," says Mr. Wood," * is about two feet long. He dwells in large burrows or holes, of his own digging, which have a single entrance, and are divided into many apartments. He goes about during the night in search of fruits, roots, and herbs; and is

* See his Zoography, vol. i. p. 287.

said to be particularly fond of the boxwood shrub. He is shagged all over with hard and sharp hairs, of unequal length, from two or three to twelve inches or more. These are about the thickness of stalks of corn, with intermixtures of black and white; they swell towards the middle, and terminate in a point. We are told, that when the porcupine is attacked he presents his side to the enemy, erects all his darts with a menacing air, and sometimes plunges them so deeply into the flesh of the creature by whom he is assaulted, that several of them remain in the wounds, and are detached from his body when he retires. The sockets of these are afterwards filled by others, which are enlarged by time. The power which travellers have said the porcupine possesses, of darting his quills to a distance, is an error, which probably originated from his ability to erect and move them when irritated, and from some of them being but loosely attached to the skin, and therefore sometimes falling to the ground. It was probably some of these loose quills that were found by Ellis, at Hudson's Bay, sticking in the mouth of a dead wolf, which was far more likely to be the consequence of the wolf's voraciousness than of the porcupine's resentment.

"These animals are hunted by the Americans, from whom we learn, that they seldom live longer than fifteen years; that the female goes with young seven months, and only brings forth one at a time; that she suckles it about a month, and accustoms it betimes to live, like herself, upon vegetables and the bark of trees; that while under her protection she is very fierce in its defence, but at other times fearful,

timid, and harmless. The porcupine never attempts to bite, but is always anxious to evade his pursuers. If hunted by a wolf, he climbs the nearest tree, and waits there till he has completely exhausted the patience of his adversary; the wolf being conscious that he is only wasting his time, leaves the porcupine to himself, and seeks out for some more penetrable game. When this animal meets with a serpent, against whom he carries on a perpetual war, he rolls himself up like a ball, concealing his head and feet, and then tumbles upon his enemy, and kills him with his bristles.

"Mr. Church gives an account of a live porcupine, which the late Sir Ashton Lever frequently turned on a grass-plat behind his house, to play with a tame hunting leopard and a large Newfoundland dog. As soon as they were let loose, the leopard and dog began to pursue the porcupine, who always at first endeavoured to escape by flight, but upon finding that ineffectual, he would thrust his head into some corner, making a snorting noise, and erecting his spines, with which his pursuers pricked their noses, till they quarrelled between themselves, and thus gave him an opportunity to escape.

"Porcupines are found in India, in Tartary, in Persia, and in all parts of Africa. They produce a bezoar, which was very highly valued, and used to sell for an enormous price, when it was the fashion to use that stone as a medicine." In India the porcupine is very commonly met with among ruins; and in visiting the numerous mausoleums on the banks of the Goomty, near Juanpoor, many of which are in a state of great

dilapidation, this animal may frequently be seen in common with much more formidable creatures, such as the cobra de capella, and other snakes, against the assaults of which its spines furnish an effectual defence. The Hindoos never molest it, so that there is probably no country in the world where it enjoys such perfect freedom from aggression as in Hindostan.

CHAPTER V.

In India, no less than in Turkey and Persia, every Mohammedan of rank prides himself upon the number of those unhappy victims of his pleasures, which crowd his haram, where they live in a state of splendid misery, their lives being a vassalage of degrading pomp and meretricious splendour. Here the pure impulses of affection seldom or never elevate the heart, but passions of the basest kind are generated and fostered in this prison-house of gorgeous but revolting sensuality. Even the favourites enjoy no higher pleasure than the most neglected: on the contrary, being objects of envy and hatred to the rest of their enslaved companions, they are exposed to the continual effects of those passions, so that their lives are one perpetual scene of vexation and disturbance. The more they are distinguished by the master of their earthly destinies, the less they are regarded by the inthralled community among whom they are doomed to dwell; and consequently there is little enticement to court the favour of him for the gratification of whose depraved appetites they are incarcerated for the term of their natural lives, in youth caressed, in their maturer years neglected, and in age despised.

A Mahomedan Lady presenting Betel to her Lord

The engraving represents a Mohammedan of rank receiving a visit from one of his favourite women, who, according to the custom of the East, among the votaries of the sensual Prophet of Mecca, is presenting him with a rose, as a pledge of her affection. The lordly mussulmaun is enjoying his hookah in all the state of Oriental luxury, the Chowry-burdaur being in attendance to keep off the musquitoes, and other troublesome insects, by waving over the head of his luxurious master the tail of the Thibet ox, known to Eastern naturalists under the Tartaric designation of Yak. Upon these, and similar occasions, it generally happens that the great man is attended by a band of musicians, who exert their skill to share his approbation with the beautiful favourite.

The Mohammedans in Hindostan frequently employ Hindoo musicians at their entertainments, because these are generally better skilled in their profession than those of a different creed; and music is considered essential to the perfection of Eastern luxury. What would stun a European ear, or sadly discompose nerves familiarised with the more fascinating vibrations of European melodies, is in India relished as an enjoyment of the highest kind.

Perhaps there is no amusement in which both Mohammedans and Hindoos so much delight as in music. It accompanies all the festivals of the latter, all their processions, whether solemn or gay, many of their religious ceremonies, and is almost everywhere daily resorted to as an evening recreation for the social circle. Live where you may in India, if it be within the vicinity of a hamlet, or even of a single hut, you

are perpetually stunned with the clash and clangor of cymbals, trumpets, drums, together with the din of numerous other instruments, as various in form as in power. The great charm of their blended harmonies to the ravished Indian seems to be in proportion to the quantity, not the quality of sound. It is quite astonishing to see the extraordinary excitement often produced, in the usually phlegmatic Hindoo, by that harsh minstrelsy which he is accustomed to think the perfection of melody. The effect is electrical. His eyes, which were before relaxed into a languid expression of half-consciousness, become suddenly kindled with a blaze of enthusiasm, and he joins the procession, which the minstrels are enlivening by their discordant strains, with gestures of frantic delight. With him no excitement is higher than that caused by the tomtom, the trumpet, and the vina. I have frequently seen him wrought to such a pitch of intoxication as to be desperately dangerous, foaming at the mouth, his eyes darting fire, and ready to perpetrate the most ferocious acts upon any person whom the prejudices of caste should expose to the exacerbation of his maniacal frenzy.

Highly as the natives of Hindostan think of the acquirements of Europeans generally, they consider that we fall infinitely short of themselves in musical skill; although nothing can be well conceived more painfully distracting than the clamour which they raise when performing their indigenous strains. The vernacular language of the savage is not apparently more rough and barbarous than the vernacular music of the Hindoos, when produced by those itinerant

professors who in every country are the bane of true taste, and libellers of the art which they profess to illustrate.

It must be admitted, however, that in spite of the extreme discordances of their popular music, it would be a grave mistake to suppose they have nothing more refined than what is generally heard at their feasts, processions, and village revels. There cannot be a more substantive fallacy than that which takes for granted that the itinerant musicians of India give a just idea of the progress of musical art among a people who were in the highest degree civilized, when in this land of social refinement the wicker idol yearly consumed its holocaust of human victims. We should have just as perfect an idea of musical science in England from the fiddle, bagpipe, and drum, of those vulgar harmonists who frequent the pothouses of St. Giles's and Petticoat Lane, as we can form of that of the Hindoos from the wretched performances of their itinerant musicians. The fact is, that in all countries these are the very worst of their class, being for the most part common vagabonds, who pick up a precarious livelihood in various ways, music being their ostensible profession; but frequently exercising their ingenuity in the art of manual appropriation, when detection leads in this country to the gallows or the hulks, and in India to imprisonment or stripes.

Ward, in his "View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos," mentions at least forty different kinds of musical instruments peculiar to their community; and I have seen drawings of no less than thirty-six sorts, in which not more than

half a dozen of those mentioned by Ward are represented, so that the number, I should think, if all were enumerated, would not fall far short of a hundred. Not only are these instruments formed upon scientific principles, but many of them are made with great intricacy of construction, and are capable of a nicety of adaptation in the developement of choral effects, little imagined by the fastidious in the more perfect art of Europe, where music has attained to a state of the proudest preeminence. Most of these instruments may be used with considerable advantage in orchestral combinations, and from some of them tones of much more than ordinary sweetness are occasionally produced when touched by the hand of a skilful performer.

It appears that the exercise of music was very early practised among the Hindoos, and carried to a high pitch of excellence, if we consider the low state of musical science in every part of the world at the period when it was understood on the banks of the Indus and the Ganges, and cultivated with considerable success. There are several old treatises in Sanscrit upon this interesting subject, in which it is handled with a degree of intelligence now rarely to be found among native professors; indeed, it seems to be the prevailing opinion among the learned natives that the moderns are much behind their forefathers in musical knowledge. This is not to be wondered at in a people whom perpetual conquests have, for the last four centuries especially, reduced to a state of bitter dependency; and whose science and literature are, obviously, from this very cause, in a state of gene-

ral decadency. National education, which was once their glory and their boast, when every village had its schoolmaster, and a female philosopher, whose writings are even now prized as oracles of moral wisdom, furnished text-books to the college of Madura, has lapsed into a state of melancholy desuetude, and the poorer orders of Hindoos are in a condition of deplorable ignorance; so that those crimes consequent upon the absence of knowledge, prevail among them to a melancholy extent. Nevertheless, though

"Fallen from their high estate,"

there still exist great and glorious remains of the splendours of by-gone generations—immortal monuments at once of their cultivated and mighty capacities in the pursuit of wisdom. And even now may be frequently found among them those who have trodden the perplexed labyrinths of speculative philosophy, and the scarcely less intricate paths of inductive science, with untired feet and a steady aim, coming out of the elaborate pursuit with minds well stored and hearts spiritualized by the search.

The Hindoos are, as a people, devotedly attached to their national institutions, which are consecrated by the sanctions of high antiquity, and endeared by those prejudices which time and ignorance never fail to cherish; and ignorance has now, for several generations, been sadly superinduced to the miseries of subjugation. They have, as I have already said, the highest opinion of their national music, and I cannot better show the fervency of their faith in this particular than by an extract from the third volume of

the "Asiatic Researches," on the musical modes of the Hindoos, by Sir William Jones.

"I have often been assured," he says, "by a credible eye-witness, that two wild antelopes used often to come from their woods to the place where a more savage beast, Sira Juddowlah, entertained himself with concerts; and that they listened to the strains with an appearance of pleasure, till the monster in whose soul there was no music, shot one of them to display his archery. Secondly, a learned native of this country told me that he had frequently seen the most venomous and most malignant snakes leave their holes upon hearing tunes on a flute, which, as he supposed, gave them peculiar delight. And, thirdly, an intelligent Persian, who repeated his story again and again, and permitted me to write it down from his own lips, declared that he had more than once been present when a celebrated lutanist, Mirza Mohammed, surnamed Bulbul, was playing to a large company, in a grove near Shiraz, when he distinctly saw the nightingales trying to vie with the musician, sometimes warbling on the trees, sometimes fluttering from branch to branch, as if they wished to approach the instrument whence the melody proceeded; and at length dropping on the ground in a kind of ecstacy, from which they were soon raised, he assured me, by a change of the mode."

We should do the Indians a gross injustice if we imagined their music was only cultivated by the commoner order, who follow the rabble to a festival, cavalcade, or religious procession, and frequently accompany upon their instruments, rude in the execu-

tion, but showing sufficient skill in the design, songs the most disgustingly licentious, sung by the vilest characters. The best artists in Hindostan are to be found among the rich and learned, who often study music as a science, and occasionally attain considerable proficiency in it. Indeed, in some instances, they have manifested a knowledge of foreign music which might shame many of our own professors.

The antiquity of Hindoo song is attested by existing records; and when the war-songs of the Germans, in the time of Tacitus, were pealed from hill to hill, like the cry of the Scottish gathering, or echoed through the dark tracts of their primeval forests, over which perhaps the waters of the universal deluge had poured their devastation, the vina * of the Hindoos was heard amid the palm-groves of the East, tuned to scientific measures, and sharing with the Eastern nightingale the admiration of man.

There is a very ancient treatise on Indian music, by Soma, who was a "practical musician as well as a great scholar and elegant poet; for the whole book, without excepting the strains noted in letters which fill the fifth and last chapters of it, consists of masterly couplets in the melodious metre called A'ryà. The first, third, and fourth chapters explain the doctrine of musical sounds, their division and succession, the variations of scales by temperament, and the enumeration of modes, on a system totally different from those which will presently be mentioned; and the

* The Hindoo lute.

second chapter contains a minute description of different vinas, with rules for playing on them."*

"I tried in vain," says the author just quoted, "to discover any difference in practice between the Indian scale and that of our own; but knowing my ear to be very insufficiently exercised, I requested a German professor to accompany with his violin a Hindoo lutanist, who sang by note some popular airs in the loves of Krishna and Rà'dhà. He assured me that the scales were the same, and Mr. Shore† afterwards informed me, that when the voice of a native singer was in tune with his harpsichord, he found the Hindoo series of seven notes transcend like ours by a sharp third."

From these extracts it will appear that the Hindoos at an early period of their very remote history, cultivated music as a science, and that they were, moreover, deeply cognizant in the theory of sounds. Their music, if we examine its modes, appears to have the same origin as that of the Greeks, and also that of the Arabs under the Caliphs, although but few fragments of the latter remain. There is, however, one peculiarity in the music of the Hindoos; every melody is in correct measure, and may be barred like an ordinary European air. The Arabs, on the contrary, had no fixed measure, the length and brevity of their notes being, like the modern recitative, subordinate to the performer's taste. The lyric music of the Greeks was measured by the prosody of the poetry to

* On the musical modes of the Hindoos, see Asiatic Researches, vol. iii.

† The late Lord Teignmouth.

which it was adapted. The only thing possessed by modern Europeans, which bears any resemblance to the music of the ancients, is the Gregorian canto fermo, modelled upon what was supposed to exist among the Romans before the decline of art. In this chant the same variety of modes exists as in the music of antiquity, and the same names have been applied to each. Modern writers usually mistake these modes for different keys, though they all belong to one key, being composed, to speak intelligibly to a modern musician, of the different scales of the diatonic heptachord.

These same modes exist in the Hindoo music, and therefore many of them will not carry a regular modal harmony, such as distinguishes all modern European music, which contains only two modes. Thus the Hindoos, like the Greeks and Arabs, sing only in unisons; though in the native concerts I have sometimes distinguished a third or a fifth struck upon the final note. But this is mere instinct; the human ear naturally conceives these harmonic intervals, and this is so true that I have heard bands of Mozambique negroes, whose music is strictly that of nature, sing in three parts, and their ear led them instinctively to the common chord, and the chord of the dominant seventh. The Hindoos pretend to musical science, and are, therefore, disposed to reject that which Nature teaches them. The consequence is, that when they light unconsciously upon and sound a harmonic interval, with its fundamental note, it breaks the monotony of their unisons, and they consider it a blemish.

The practice of music is universal. There appears

no nation upon the face of the earth to whom it is not familiar. It is, so to speak, the vernacular idiom of nature, and may be considered to be almost coeval with the creation; for man, soon perceiving that his voice was susceptible of most expressive modulations, of producing an innumerable variety of tones, and of modifying its inflexions in endless changes, would naturally employ the power with which his Creator had gifted him, in embodying that music which he felt himself to have the power of expressing. He perceived that there was, more or less, a vocal melody in everything which God had created, capable of emitting voluntary sound.

Music is supposed by some learned men to have been invented by the Egyptians, from whom it circulated through Greece, and thence through India, probably in the age of Pythagoras, who visited Hindostan and brought with him from that country the philosophy of the Eastern sages; but music was no doubt among the sciences then cultivated by the Hindoos, as the essay of Soma, already alluded to, is imagined to have existed at that period. Those writers who ascribe the invention of music to the Egyptians, derive its name from a word primitive in the Egyptian language; but such descriptions of proof are at all times extremely unsatisfactory; for to what strange conclusions the fanciful tracings of etymologies frequently lead, may be seen in a note of the learned Dr. Adam Clarke on the temptation in Paradise, where by an elaborate process of etymological induction, he proves, apparently to his own satisfaction, that the serpent which tempted Eve was a huge comely baboon.

It is contended by those who ascribe to Egypt the distinguished honour of having first arranged a series of sounds in harmonic order, that they received the intimation from the stridulous murmur of winds whistling through reeds or other vegetable tubes on the banks of the Nile. But it seems absurd, and is in fact opposed to every suggestion of probability—nay, it appears incompatible with sound philosophical inference to suppose, that where nature had rendered the human voice capable of such variety of modulations, which were constantly obvious to the ear, a people, however rude, should have recourse for the suggestions of musical concordance, and the combination of harmonious sounds into scientific order, to the clatter made by the wind passing between reeds or similar productions of the soil. There were surely other harmonies in nature much more likely to have indicated the rudiments of an art cultivated with more or less success in every nation under heaven. The birds, those artless choristers of the woods and fields, may very reasonably be supposed to have suggested nature as at once the most exquisite and transporting prototype of art; and man was thus led to imitate, of course at first rudely and imperfectly, what Divine wisdom had pronounced to be very good. The Deity has stamped everything with the signet of consummate harmony. The very roar of the tiger becomes the solemn stillness of the forest, as much as the plaintive notes of the nightingale the silence of the glen, or those of the thrush and blackbird that of the secluded copse.

We find that even among the most savage tribes

there generally prevails a keen relish for, and a ready aptitude in, producing an artificial combination of sounds, constituting a melody in which they delight, however rude and repulsive to more fastidious ears, which the refinements of extreme cultivation have rendered difficult to please; so that music is a universal, and, to a certain extent, may be denominated an intuitive science. That it was cultivated in the first ages of society may be proved from Moses, who records that before the flood, Jubal, the seventh in descent from Adam, by his eldest son Cain, "was the father of all such as handle the harp or organ;" here distinctly averring that the harp and organ were instruments known in the very earliest ages of the world. By some commentators, however, those expressions are considered to be mere generic terms, the former applying to all the stringed, and the latter to all the wind instruments then employed.

In considering the musical qualifications of different countries, we are to remember that our perceptions of the harmonious, as well as of the beautiful, depend altogether upon circumstances: our minds are moulded and our tastes nurtured by those circumstances. The man who had never beheld the sun but from a lofty eminence, or from valleys surrounded by gigantic shapes, where vast crags tremble above his head, precipices yawn beneath his feet, and the perpetual dash of the mountain-torrent chimes in his ear the clamorous music of his native hills,—such a man, surely, would entertain very different feelings of the sublime and beautiful, as well of what was addressed to the ear as to the eye, from him who had passed his

days among grassy meads and sunny plains, where the sweet song of birds and the beautiful livery of fruitful fields, had impressed his heart with gentler melodies, and his eye with more subdued objects of delight. Our notions of external things are as various as the expression of our features. Different impressions are made by the same objects upon different minds according as those minds have been predisposed by certain local associations or social influences, repugnant to the notions suggested by the peculiar bias of education, that places before our mental organs the mirror through which all objects are both morally and spiritually discerned. The swarthy African is said to paint the devil white, and to his ear that may be delightful harmony which to ours is horrid discord. The savage

> ——Whose rough, untutor'd mind
> Sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind,

may perhaps discover as fine melody in those rude tones which shock our more refined perceptions, as we do in the ravishing strains of Haydn or Mozart. Our fastidious tastes have been taught to reject everything musical that has not been consecrated by the lofty creations of genius, or at least been submitted to the intricate rules of science; so that we may fail to discover in the rude strains of the mere musician of nature in savage life, agreeable unions of sound, which are evident to less sensitive ears.

It will then be manifest, if there be any truth in the premises I have advanced, that music may really exist where we do not perceive it, only because our habits have been familiarised, and our emotions wont

to be excited by different modes of acoustic combinations. Let us not, therefore, affect to despise the music of Hindostan, because we happen to think it inferior to our own; remembering too, that even Europeans living in India, seldom hear it in its perfection.

Captain Luard exhibits among his groups of Indian figures a band of itinerant musicians, such as are commonly engaged by wealthy natives at their entertainments, for the niggard remuneration of a few pice—a small copper coin, in value about the third of our penny. In these bands there is occasionally a mixture of Hindoo and Mohammedan performers, which is a symptom that the inveterate prejudices of caste are fast subsiding throughout India. This union of interest, indeed, among the votaries of Mohammed and of Brahma, can only take place where those prejudices are despised, which is now by no means unfrequently the case among the lowest of the four civil divisions of the Hindoo population.

These bands of native performers are commonly seated upon a coarse rug in the veranda of the house where they exercise their skill for the amusement of the lord of the mansion and his guests. Usually there is a vocal performer, who beats time with the fingers of his right hand on the palm of his left, while he is accompanied by his companions on their respective instruments.

In Captain Luard's group one is represented playing upon a sort of trilateral guitar, an instrument certainly not common among Hindoo musicians, as it is neither enumerated by Ward nor by the author to whose

works I have before alluded. Another is playing on a serinda, the common violin of Hindostan; while a third performs upon two drums, one of which he strikes with the fingers of his left hand, and rubs the other with those of his right, as Europeans occasionally play the tambourine.

CHAPTER VI.

The life of Humayoon is one of those romances of history, which, in the words of Lord Byron, may be truly said to be "stranger than fiction." He was a prince no less remarkable for his wit than for the urbanity of his manners. He was tall, well made, and altogether of a distinguished presence. Though far inferior to his father, the renowned Baber, both as a general and statesman, he was nevertheless well skilled in the science of government; and notwithstanding the early part of his life, after he ascended the imperial throne, was a period of melancholy reverses, he recovered his crown after a long interval of privation and suffering, and maintained with dignity the dominions which the superior genius of his predecessor had established in one of the finest countries upon the surface of the globe.

Perhaps there is not an act of greater conduct and more determined enterprise upon record than the taking, by Humayoon, of Champanere, a fortress considered impregnable, and certainly one of the strongest in Hindostan. Here Bahadur Shah, King of Guzerat, had deposited the principal portion of his vast treasures, which the Moghul prince was determined to obtain at whatever cost. The fort was defended by Yekhtyar Khan, a noble of great experience

The Emperor Humayoon

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and bravery, and for a length of time little or no progress was made by the besiegers. The garrison were provided with provisions sufficient to last for several years; but still with that unaccountable propensity to accumulate, which characterises some men, who are never satisfied with a sufficiency, the governor determined to continue adding to his already overgrown store at all hazards. He was in the habit of receiving his supplies daily by a secret pathway, which led through a thick wood, seldom traversed but by the solitary wanderer who might happen unintentionally to deviate into this unfrequented track. The jungle was almost impenetrable, no part of it having been cleared, and the path to the fortress being unknown save to the inhabitants of a distant village, who daily conveyed to the besieged certain supplies stipulated for by the governor.

Humayoon was frequently in the habit of reconnoitring in consequence of the slow progress of the siege, which he had almost made up his mind to abandon, when he fell in with a party of country people in the act of transporting provisions to the fortress. Suspecting this, he ordered them without hesitation to be seized, and when they were conducted into his presence, after he had reached his camp, he questioned them, with that grace and urbanity of manner for which he was always distinguished, upon the nature of their connexion with the enemy. It appeared from their replies that they had no intercourse with them but that arising from their supplying them with a certain quantity of provisions, which they had bound themselves by contract to do

daily, the governor Yekhtyar Khan, undertaking to purchase all they could provide. Having ascertained from them sundry interesting particulars respecting the condition of the besieged, by promising them his protection and liberal rewards, the Emperor prevailed upon the pliant villagers to conduct him in disguise to the spot where they were in the habit of obtaining admittance into the fortress. He accordingly accompanied them, as one of their own body; and, when he had made the necessary observations, returned to the camp without exciting the least suspicion in the minds of the enemy, who, secure in the strength of the battlements behind which they were ensconced, and knowing that their provisions could not be exhausted unless the siege were protracted beyond all reasonable bounds of calculation, derided the efforts of the Moghuls, and never suffered themselves for a moment to anticipate disaster.

On the very night of that day during which Humayoon had visited Champanere by the secret path, he caused to be forged a considerable number of strong iron spikes, about a foot in length, with the points so sharp as to be readily forced between the masonry or fissures of the rock which formed that portion of the rampart abutting upon the forest. These being prepared, he selected three hundred of his bravest troops and marched with them towards that part of the works which he had examined during the morning, determined if possible to gain possession of the place by escalade. Although considered by all his officers a desperate adventure, he nevertheless resolved to attempt it.

The moon shone brightly; and in order to divert the attention of the garrison from the party headed by the Emperor, several false attacks were made on parts of the fortification which were the best guarded. As access on that side of the fort which looked out upon the forest, containing the secret path, was extremely difficult, no idea of danger from this quarter was entertained; the troops were therefore withdrawn to man the ramparts where the more immediate peril seemed to threaten: the defence was consequently so weak that there was not left a sufficient force on the side facing the forest to man the walls.

The hopes of Humayoon were raised to the highest pitch of confidence when he reached the base of the battlement, which was lofty and constructed with extraordinary strength. With great difficulty the iron spikes, with which he had come provided, were fixed without interruption in the scarp of the rock. This process was necessarily one of much difficulty and peril; it was, however, at length accomplished, and thirty-nine officers ascended. The last of these was Beiram Khan Turkoman, who subsequently became the tutor of the renowned Akbar, and was afterwards much distinguished both as a valiant warrior and able legislator.

The Emperor, seeing that the whole band whom he had selected for this arduous enterprise had gained the rampart, boldly followed, and passed over the parapet after his brave troops. They encountered not the slightest opposition; and having surmounted every difficulty, opened the gates to their companions who were waiting without the walls. The whole

detachment were admitted before sunrise. Not a creature within the fort suspected that an enemy was so near. All save the sentinels on the ramparts were hushed in slumber. At a signal, agreed upon before the troops of Humayoon had quitted their tents, they attacked the garrison with irresistible resolution. The latter, taken by surprise and having armed themselves ineffectually, made but a faint resistance: many of them started from their sleep only to be struck down by the sword of an unsparing foe. On all sides slaughter did her sanguinary work. Confusion everywhere prevailed. The shrieks of women and children, mingled with the clash of arms, added another feature of horror to the dreadful scene.

While the frightful work of carnage was going on, Humayoon, at the head of his detachment of chosen followers, cut his way, sword in hand, through all opposers, and crying out, "Allah Akbar!" a phrase signifying God is great, and the war-cry of Mohammedan soldiers, he rushed towards the principal gate, burst it open, and the whole body of his troops entering soon overpowered the astonished and paralysed garrison. With a cruelty which nothing can extenuate, every soldier within the walls was put to death, except the governor and his family, who were within an inner citadel; here for many days Yekhtyar Khan defended himself with undaunted resolution against the united force of the Moghuls. He was, however, at length obliged to capitulate; but in consequence of the valour he had displayed in defence of the citadel, he obtained honourable terms from a generally merciful and generous conqueror. He was allowed to

retire with his family, and the Moghul Emperor took possession of the immense treasure contained in this celebrated fortress. "The great strength of this place," says Ferishta,* "the numerous garrison, the boldness and success of the enterprise by which its capture was achieved, render this action equal, in the opinion of military men, to anything of the kind recorded in history. Here the treasure of Guzerat, the accumulation of many years, was distributed among the troops; Humayoon gave to his officers and soldiers as much gold, silver, or jewels, as could be heaped on their respective shields, proportioning the value to their rank and merit: for the wealth of Room, Khutta, and Furung (that is, of Asia Minor, Tartary, and Europe,) which had been there collected to a vast amount, fell into the hands of the captors upon this occasion."

The fort of Champanere was taken by Humayoon four years after his accession to the throne of Delhi, from which six years subsequently he was deposed by Shere Shah, having been defeated by him in a sanguinary conflict, in which his life was saved by a water-carrier. The King had urged his horse into the Ganges, where the animal, unable to bear up against the current, sank, and left the Sovereign struggling for his life in the midst of the stream. At this critical moment a water-carrier, named Nizam, having inflated his leathern bag, threw it to the Emperor, who was thus enabled to cross the river in safety. On reaching the bank he asked the name of the person who had saved his life. "Nizam," replied the man.

* Life of Humayoon, vol. ii. pp. 79—80. Briggs' translation.

—The King answered, "I will make your name as celebrated as that of Nizam-addeen-Aulia,* and you shall sit on my throne." On reaching his capital, Humayoon did not forget his promise. He ordered the water-carrier to be conducted into his presence, and having seated him on the musnud at his right hand, allowed him, during six hours, to enjoy the dignity of a prince, and to distribute presents to his relatives to an unlimited extent. The man took care during this short period of his enviable distinction to make provision for himself and family for the rest of his and their days.

Humayoon suffered a second defeat by the Afghan chief. In this memorable engagement his army, amounting to ninety thousand cavalry, were almost wholly destroyed, and he was eventually obliged to fly the country, which his father had so gloriously subdued, leaving his crown to the conqueror. Having retreated to different places, which he was compelled by the victorious troops of the Afghan conqueror to evacuate, he retired to Amurkote, a strong fortress in the desert of Sinde, where the Prince Akbar, afterwards so renowned in history as the Emperor of Hindostan, was born.

"The country through which they fled," says Ferishta,† "being an entire desert of sand, the Moghuls were in the utmost distress for water: some ran mad, others fell down dead. Nothing was heard but dreadful screams and lamentations; while, to add to their misery, news arrived of the enemy's approach. Hu-

* A celebrated saint.

† Life of Humayoon, vol. ii. pp. 93—4—5.

mayoon ordered all those who could fight, to form the rearguard, and allowed the women and baggage to move forward; but the enemy did not make their appearance. The king rode on in front to see how it fared with his family; and it was fortunate he did so, for night coming on, those in the rear lost their way, and in the morning the enemy were discovered in close pursuit. The king was left with a few soldiers only, commanded by one Ameer Sheikh Ali, who, with about twenty brave men, resolved to sell their lives dearly; and having repeated the creed, turned upon their pursuers. The first arrow discharged reached the heart of the chief of the enemy, and the remainder fled. The Moghuls, pursuing in their turn, took many of the enemy's camels; after which the king, coming to a well, ordered the whole party to kneel down and offer up prayers for their escape. During the day those who had lost their way joined again.

"On marching forward, the Moghuls were more distressed than before, there being no water for three whole days. On the fourth day they came to a well, which was so deep that a drum was beaten to give notice to the man driving the bullocks that the bucket had reached the top.

"This simple mode of raising water," says Captain Briggs, the translator of Ferishta's 'History of the Rise and Fall of the Mohammedan Power in India,' "is practised throughout the East. A large leathern bag or bucket, containing from ten to fifteen gallons, is suffered to drop into the well, and drawn up by oxen, the rope passing over a small wheel which traverses

on a frame overhanging the surface of the water. Some of the wells in the deserts of Amurkote and Jesselmere are from a hundred to six hundred feet deep, and the movements of the cattle raising the water are regulated by a small kettledrum.

"The unhappy followers of the fugitive Emperor were so impatient for water, that as soon as the first bucket appeared, several of them threw themselves upon it before it had quite reached the surface, and fell in. The next day they arrived at a brook; and the camels, which had not tasted water for several days, were allowed to quench their thirst; but having drunk to excess, several of them died. The king, after enduring unheard-of miseries, at length reached Amurkote with only a few attendants. The Rajah, who had the title of Rana, took compassion on his misfortunes, and spared nothing that could alleviate his sufferings or tend to console him in his distress."

In this strong, but solitary fortress, situated in a dreary and inhospitable desert, Prince Akbar was born, on the fifth Rujub in the year of the Hegira nine hundred and forty-nine, answering to our fourteenth of October 1542. "When this joyful news was made known, all the chiefs came and offered their congratulations. The king then ordered the author of this memoir (Jouher) to bring him the articles he had given in trust to him; on which I went and brought two hundred shāhrūkhys (a silver coin of unknown value), a silver bracelet, and a pod of musk. The two former he ordered me to give back to the owners from whom they had been taken, as formerly mentioned. He then called for a china plate, and having

broken the pod of musk, distributed it among all the principal persons, saying, 'This is all the present I can afford to make you on the birth of my son, whose fame will, I trust, be one day expanded all over the world, as the perfume of the musk now fills this apartment.' After this ceremony the drums were beaten, and the trumpets proclaimed the auspicious event to the world." *

That very evening the Emperor performed an act of clemency which deserves to be recorded, actuated probably by the joy which filled his heart at the birth of his son. A Moghul deserter was taken, and brought before Humayoon. "Here," said one of the chiefs, "is the fellow who traduced your majesty."—"Well," replied the king, "he has received his reward; let him be restored to liberty!" The man was accordingly released.

* From the "Tezkereh al Vakiāt."

CHAPTER VII.

THE sufferings and privations of the Emperor during his flight from his own kingdom have seldom been paralleled in the histories of monarchs. He was abandoned by his friends, treated with indifference by his former dependants and allies, with insult by many of those petty princes whose protection he solicited in his reverses, and with duplicity by all, save a few attached followers. On his way to Amurkote his sufferings, and those of his people, were of the most distressing kind. For two days they marched in the desert without finding water, suffering the most frightful privations, insomuch that several of the attendants died. At length, reaching a well, Humayoon, prostrating himself on the ground, returned thanks to God for his gracious mercy; then ordering all the leathern vessels to be filled, he sent the water-carriers back to meet the people, who were coming up, to the last degree distressed from their long and trying thirst.

Among the followers of the fugitive monarch was a merchant, who had fallen down on the road, and was unable to proceed. His son was standing over him in an agony of despair. To the father, Humayoon was indebted a considerable sum of money. Having

assuaged his own thirst, the Emperor rode back to encourage his followers, and seeing the merchant lying in the road, almost at the point of death, he thought this would be a favourable opportunity to cancel a debt which he was without the means of paying; as it would at once release his mind from the burthen of an obligation he was unable to remove but by the method now contemplated. Advancing to the famishing merchant, he proposed to supply him with any quantity of water he might require, provided he would abandon his pecuniary demand. The sufferer replied: "A cup of water is, in my present situation, more valuable than the wealth of the whole world, and I consent." * The agreement being regularly witnessed by several of the attendants, the merchant was supplied with as much water as he desired, and thus the debt was cancelled. Those among the followers who had died were buried in the desert; and the survivors, having had their thirst assuaged, proceeded eagerly to the camp, which had been pitched round the well.

Whilst the unhappy sovereign was encamped near the well, a neighbouring Rajah had conceived the design of plundering his tent; obtaining, however, a hint of the Rajah's intention, Humayoon ordered the guides, and two camel drivers, to be seized, disarmed, and put under restraint. One of these latter, however, having released himself and a companion, stabbed the soldier who guarded them, and killed the camels, together with a favourite horse and mule. This so incensed the Moghuls, that having sacrificed the camel-driver

* Vide "Tezkereh al Vakiāt," p. 37.

to their resentment, they attacked a neighbouring village, which had manifested signs of hostile intention, and cut off the inhabitants to a man.

Fearing the consequences of this rash act of retaliation, the Emperor's followers threatened to leave him, and endeavour to make their peace with the Rajah, who was preparing to avenge the slaughter of his subjects; and in fact, two of his most confidential attendants actually did desert. In this dilemma, Humayoon gave orders that his little band should direct their march westward. They accordingly travelled all night with the utmost despatch; nevertheless, in spite of their activity, at daybreak it was discovered that they were pursued by three detachments of the Rajah's troopers, the whole amounting to fifteen hundred men. Humayoon was now reduced to sixteen troopers, and these, in fact, were the boldest of his followers, whom he had mounted on the baggage horses. These brave men were placed under the command of a gallant officer, named Ali Beg, who advanced resolutely towards the enemy, resolved to perish in defence of his sovereign. He gave orders to his little band to discharge their arrows when sufficiently near the advancing foe to be certain of their aim; and this order they executed so happily, that at the first discharge the two principal leaders of the enemy fell dead upon the plain. Seeing the fate of their chiefs, a panic seized the troops of the Rajah, which were raw levies, made up on the present emergency from the undisciplined and ill-conditioned inhabitants of the desert, and they fled in all directions.

The heads of the two chiefs were cut from their bodies, as trophies of this easy but signal defeat.

The Emperor continued his march, Ali Beg with his sixteen troopers protecting the rear. It fortunately happened, that he was now joined by a number of followers, who having lost their way in the desert, had been separated from the main body; and the royal party being thus reinforced, moved on with better hopes and with renewed confidence. Having halted at a large tank, two messengers arrived from the Rajah, to complain of certain acts of aggression, for which immediate compensation was demanded. An answer of defiance was instantly returned, and the Moghuls continued their march; but, on passing a fort, they were assaulted by the garrison, whom, after a skirmish of several hours, they repulsed with great loss to the assailing party; and renewing their march, they stopped for the night at a village about five coss* in advance, without further molestation.

Meanwhile the Rajah had given orders that a body of his troops should precede the Emperor, and fill the wells with sand; consequently, the next day, when they halted at the usual stage, no water was to be procured. "On this occasion," says the author of the "Tezkereh al Vakiāt," † "the King ordered the camels to be placed in a circle round the horses and tents, directed that the people should be on the alert, and said, he would himself keep watch, by walking round the circle all night. Sheikh Ali would not

* Ten miles. † Pages 41-2.

consent to this proposal, but insisted on his Majesty's lying down, and that he himself should keep watch. On this, the King went and lay down. Whilst he was asleep a thief came into the camp, took the sword from under his Majesty's head, and drew it half out, but being alarmed, left it in that situation, and went away.

"When the King awoke, he saw that his sword was half way drawn from the scabbard, and was much astonished: he therefore called to the servant, who was sleeping at the foot of the bed, and asked him if he had drawn the sword. The man replied, that he would not have ventured to do so for the world.

"In short, we marched from that place and arrived at a stage where there were four wells, in three of which we found water, but the fourth was choked up. In order to secure an equal division of the water, his Majesty assigned one of the wells for his own household; the second he gave to Terdy Beg and his followers; and the third to Khaled Beg and his attendants. As we had no buckets to draw the water, a copper pot was let down and pulled up by a camel; but as the well was very deep,* and the pot a long time coming up, in order to prevent the people from crowding round the mouth of the well, they were ordered to keep at a distance till a drum was beaten to give notice of the proper time, when they should be regularly served in turn. Notwithstanding this precaution, in consequence of the anxiety to be first served, much quarrelling took place among the people. At length

* See page 76.

the domestics of his Majesty came up and complained that Terdy Beg had given water to his own horses and camels, but would not let them have any for their animals; they also swore that if he did not supply them, they would fight for it, and either have water or be killed. On this his Majesty, fearing contention, rode to the well and said to Terdy Beg in the Tūrky language, 'Be so good as to draw off your people for a short time from the well till mine are served, which will prevent disputes.' Terdy Beg complied with his Majesty's command, and the servants procured a scanty supply of water. In short, the misery we suffered at this stage was intolerable."*

The struggle at the well at this place was so vehement, that when the bucket was brought to the surface, in their eagerness to seize it many of the unhappy sufferers fell in, and several camels died from drinking to excess. The sufferings of the royal party had now become intolerable, and they were encreasing every moment. During their journey on the following day, a number of persons perished under the tortures of thirst. The Emperor himself was obliged to ride on a camel, and after a perilous march of ten coss, or twenty miles from the last halting-place, he entered Amurkote attended only by seven horsemen. The Rajah received him with courteous hospitality, respecting his misfortunes and relieving them with generous liberality. He promised to place two thousand five hundred cavalry immediately at Humayoon's disposal for the recovery of his kingdom. The Emperor gladly accepted the offer of his illustrious ally, and leav-

* See likewise Dow's Hindostan, vol. ii. p. 156.

ing his family at Amurkote under the Rajah's charge, immediately marched with the troops placed under his command to Tatta, the capital of the Delta of the Indus.

It was while encamped on the banks of a tank on his march towards that capital, about thirty-four miles from Amurkote, that he received the joyful intelligence of prince Akbar's birth.

"Humayoon, after returning thanks to God, left his family in the hands of the Rana, and with his assistance marched towards Bhukkur. But a mutiny breaking out among the Rana's troops, they dispersed, and nothing could be effected. Some of the King's officers also deserted him, while the gallant Ameer Sheikh Ali, one of his most faithful adherents, was killed in an action with Shah Hussein Arghoon. Humayoon now retired towards Candahar, having been joined by Beiram Khan Turkoman from Guzerat. Kamran Mirza, who had obtained possession of Candahar from his brother Hindal Mirza, had placed Askurry Mirza in the government, and Shah Hussein Arghoon now wrote to him that Humayoon, being without followers, might easily be seized; so that Askurry Mirza, instead of affording his brother aid in his distress, attacked Humayoon as he approached Candahar, and obliged him to leave his infant son Akbar behind in camp, and fly to Khorassan with his mother, the Sultana, and only twenty-two horsemen, one of whom was Beiram Khan. Askurry Mirza being disappointed of his object, on coming into Humayoon's camp, carried off his nephew, the infant Akbar, to Candahar.

"Humayoon, finding he could place no reliance on

his brother, proceeded to Seestan, where he was hospitably received by Ahmed Sultan Shamloo, the governor, on the part of Shah Tamasp, King of Persia. This officer met and escorted Humayoon to the capital of Seestan, and treated him with the utmost consideration. From this generous chief, Humayoon received not only a supply of money, but a number of attendants were furnished for his queen. The king having taken what appeared absolutely necessary, proceeded to Herat, where he was met by the Prince Mohammed Mirza, the King of Persia's eldest son. This prince omitted nothing of that generosity and politeness which so remarkably distinguished his character, and provided the unfortunate exile abundantly with every requisite for his journey to the Persian court. In his progress, Humayoon was met by all the governors of the provinces, who paid him their respects, and made magnificent entertainments for him. On his arrival at Kuzween, he deputed Beiram Khan to Ispahan on a mission to the King of Persia, and awaited his return at Kuzween."*

The reception which the Moghul Emperor met with from the King of Persia is said by Sir John Malcolm, in his Persian history, to have been highly flattering; but a very different account of his treatment by Shah Tamasp, is given in the memoirs of Humayoon, written by his own order, and supposed to be revised by his own hand. In this work the imperial fugitive is described as having suffered numerous mortifications and unprovoked indignities.

* Ferishta, vol. ii. pp. 95, 6, 7.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE usurpation of Shere Shah, which reduced Humayoon to the condition of a fugitive and dependant upon the hospitality of a foreign monarch, took place nine years after the accession of the latter to his father's throne. The taking of the celebrated Rhotas, a hill-fort of immense strength, of which an engraving appears in the second volume of the Oriental Annual, being one of the most remarkable events of Indian warfare, and only having just preceded the flight of the Emperor Humayoon from his kingdom, deserves a brief notice in this place. That fortress was situated upon the top of a lofty and almost inaccessible hill, each pass to the summit being protected by a gateway of immense strength, which it was necessary to gain before a further approach to the fort could be made. There were several of these fortified gates to be secured before the grand obstacle could be reached. The building above was of prodigious strength, being based upon a lofty rock, and inaccessible on all sides but through the main gate, which commanded the ascent. Within the walls was a large space of very fertile land; this furnished the garrison with grain and fruits and a plentiful supply of excellent water, found everywhere in great abundance by digging a few feet below the surface.

Shere Shah, being determined to obtain possession of this important place, but knowing that there was no chance of succeeding by open force, devised a stratagem, which was attended with complete success. The governor of Rhotas, Rajah Hurry Krishn Ray, though a man of courage and conduct, was a credulous person and too easily duped by warm professions, particularly from those of whom he was predisposed to entertain a favourable opinion. The wily Afghan sent to the Rajah Krishn Ray a confidential messenger, who stated that his master being about to attempt the recovery of Bengal, which he had formerly governed, and relying upon the Rajah's friendship, hoped that in confirmation of the good fellowship existing between them, the latter would permit him to send into the fort of Rhotas his family and treasure, accompanied by their usual attendants, in order that they might be in a place of security during his absence upon a perilous and uncertain enterprise. Krishn Ray, in spite of his natural credulity, at once declined the specious solicitation; but Shere Shah, who knew his character too well to be thus easily diverted from his purpose, sent a second messenger with handsome presents. This agent, who was a plausible and artful person, assured the governor it was for his women and treasure alone that his master requested protection during his absence upon an enterprise of extreme hazard; that should he be fortunate enough to conquer Bengal, he would make proper acknowledgments for the favour granted by so disinterested a friend; but should he lose his life in the contest which he was about to provoke, he chose rather that his

family and wealth should remain in the hands of Hurry Krishn Ray, than fall into those of his enemies the Moghuls. The Rajah was deceived, and consented at once to the proposal of the Afghan chief; though it is said by the historian Ferishta, but upon what authority does not appear, that the bold Rajpoot determined to appropriate the treasure, when put in possession of it, to his own purposes. This information, however, was probably derived from an author who wrote a life of Shere Shah, and made this statement in order to extenuate the subsequent conduct of that treacherous chief.

So soon as the Rajah's consent had been obtained to the proposal of the Afghan prince, the latter provided a number of covered litters, called doolies, employed by Mohammedans of rank for the removal of their females from one place to another; within these he placed armed men disguised in female attire, excepting only the three first, which really contained women. Having likewise filled five hundred money-bags with leaden bullets, he appointed some of his bravest soldiers to carry them behind the doolies in the disguise of servants, and provided with sticks to assist their progress up the hill under so ponderous a load, so that they might appear to be bearing treasure up the mountain. They thus easily deceived the guard at the different gates, who examined the first and second doolies, but finding that they bore only women, were perfectly satisfied, and suffered the whole party to pass without further search or suspicion.

The party having reached the main gate of the fortress, the first dooly was examined with great caution,

and being found to be occupied by an old woman, was permitted to pass through the strong and well-protected portal. The next dooly was examined with a similar issue, and likewise permitted to enter. When it was ascertained that the third contained only an old woman, the scrutiny was deemed satisfactory, and no further inspection took place. The men bearing the bags had preceded the doolies, and as these latter were borne into the fortress, Krishn Ray was counting the bags of supposed treasure, which, it has been said, he intended to transfer to his own private stores. The doolies were borne to the apartment appointed for the women's reception, where they were uncovered, when the soldiers leaped from the places of their concealment, threw off their disguise, placed arms in the hands of their comrades, and rushed upon the astonished garrison with the fury of tigers. The struggle was short, but decisive. The Hindoos were overpowered; and Shere Shah, who had encamped at a small distance from Rhotas behind the hill, was admitted into the fortress, of which he took immediate possession, the Rajah meanwhile making his escape with a few followers, who were attached to his person, by a private passage.

"Thus fell," says Ferishta, "one of the most impregnable fortresses in the world into the hands of Shere Khan, together with much treasure which had been accumulating for ages. The merit of the invention of the stratagem, however, is not due to Shere Khan; the fort of Asseer, in the Deccan, having long before been surprised in the same manner by Nuseer Khan Farooky, ruler of Candeish."

Having shortly afterwards ascended the throne of Delhi, upon the abdication of Humayoon, Shere Shah reigned with much popularity for a period of five years, when he met his death before Calinjur, a hill fortress, second only to Rhotas in strength, and manned by a numerous garrison. "Shere Shah having surrounded the fort, carried on his approaches, constructing batteries for his artillery, and sinking mines under the rock. The batteries were advanced close to the walls, a breach was made, and a general assault ordered, when a shell which was thrown against the fort, burst in the battery in which the king stood, and communicating to a powder magazine that had not been properly secured, several gunners were blown up; as also the king, together with many of his chiefs, who were so severely scorched that they were carried for dead to their tents.

"In this condition, though the king breathed with great pain, he encouraged the prosecution of the attack, and continued to give his orders till in the evening news was brought to him of the reduction of the place. He then exclaimed, "Thanks be to Almighty God!" and expired. The death of Shere Shah happened on the twelfth of Rubbee-ool-Awul, in the year of the Hegira 952 (answering to May the twenty-second 1545, of the Christian era). He spent fifteen years in a military life before he ascended the throne, and sat on the musnud five years as Emperor of Hindostan." *

During the period of Shere Shah's reign, Humayoon continued dependant upon the generous hospitality of

* Ferishta, vol. ii. pp. 123-4.

the Persian king; but hearing of the Afghan sovereign's decease, he determined to make an attempt to recover his crown, being furnished by Shah Tamasp with an army of ten thousand horse. With these he marched against his brother, Askurry Mirza, who still retained possession of the young Prince Akbar, and invested the fort of Candahar. After a protracted siege, during which several old officers of distinction had joined the imperial standard, Askurry Mirza surrendered the town upon honourable terms, having received an unqualified pardon for his former defection.

Humayoon now marched to Cabul, of which he likewise gained possession. Here he found Prince Akbar, then four years old, and his mother, Banu Begum, the queen. Taking the former in his arms, he exclaimed, "Joseph by his envious brethren was cast into a well; but he was eventually exalted by Providence, as thou shalt be, to the summit of glory."*

The Emperor, after various successes and reverses, by the defeat of Secundur Shah Soor, the third in descent from Shere Shah, finally recovered his crown, which now fell for ever from the hands of the Afghans. Having disposed of several governments among his officers and faithful allies, he entered Delhi in triumph, and became for the second time sovereign of Hindostan in the month of July 1555. His death happened in the following year. Being accustomed to walk on the terraced roof of the imperial library at Delhi, he had one day taken his usual exercise, and feeling rather fatigued he sat down to enjoy the fresh

* See Ferishta's Life of Humayoon Padshah, p. 160.

air. When sufficiently refreshed, he prepared to re-enter the library, but as he was descending the steps which led from the terrace to the chamber below, the muezzin, or crier, of the royal mosque, suddenly announced the hour of prayer. The Emperor immediately paused, and having, as was his custom, repeated the creed of Islam, seated himself upon one of the steps until the functionary had ceased his summons. In his attempt to rise, Humayoon placed on the marble steps the point of his staff, but this slipping under his weight, he fell headlong, and was carried into the palace insensible. Although he recovered his senses and his speech, it was evident that his death was at hand. He lingered four days, and then expired in the fifty-second year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign over India and Cabul, amid the sincere regrets of his subjects and of his relatives. He was buried on the banks of the Jumna, and a splendid mausoleum was some years afterwards erected over his remains by his son Akbar.

This mausoleum is one of the most splendid monuments which the munificence of princes has placed among the magnificent memorials of departed royalty in that country where these monuments abound to a degree perhaps unparalleled in any other. Though built of the most costly materials, and with a lavish expenditure exceeding any thing which had preceded it, the tomb of Humayoon is remarkable for the utter absence of everything like meretricious ornament. The spectator's attention is particularly arrested by the perfect chastity of design, and singular delicacy of execution which this cele-

Mausoleum of Humayun at Delhi

brated edifice exhibits. It is composed entirely of marble, in some of its parts exhibiting beautiful specimens of the most costly mosaic, like the Taje Mah'l at Agra, built by Shah Jehan, after the same design, but still more costly, much more richly ornamented, and of considerably larger dimensions. The mausoleum of Humayoon is even now the admiration of travellers, and is altogether, according to the opinion of many, in better taste than that more celebrated and elaborate edifice, the Taje. In the neighbourhood of this noble monument of filial munificence, are the tombs of several omrahs, who had attached themselves to the Emperor in his reverses, when his country was under the dominion of an Afghan usurper. In the engraving there appear near the main structure a few date-trees, which, being taken as a scale, will furnish a tolerably just idea of the size of the mausoleum; and a few loaded camels winding their way among the solitary mansions of the dead, only disturb the sacred repose of the spot to add to its solemnity.*

* As the engravings contained in the present volume were originally selected to illustrate the lives of the Moghul Emperors, Humayoon and Akbar, I could not avoid adverting to the reigns of those distinguished men. I have not, however, attempted to write their biographies; but being compelled to give them a place in this volume, I have touched slightly upon some of the most remarkable or interesting circumstances of their respective reigns, which are both distinguished by very striking historical events. My aim has been to select those portions in the history of each reign best calculated to fix the reader's interest and to impart amusement at the same time that they convey instruction.

CHAPTER IX.

AKBAR succeeded to the throne of his father at the age of twelve years. He was the most illustrious prince of his race, having by his mild but firm and equitable administration established his kingdom on the firmest footing, transmitting to his son one of the most extensive and flourishing empires on the face of the globe. The character of this prince, though perhaps with something of the exaggeration inseparable from the hyperbolical style of Eastern declamation, has been given by the celebrated Abul Fazil, his minister, who wrote an account of his life and reign.

"It is his Majesty's constant endeavour to gain and secure the hearts of all men. Amidst a thousand cares and perplexing avocations, he suffers not his temper to be in any degree disturbed, but is always cheerful. He is ever striving to do what may be most acceptable to the Deity, and employs his mind in profound and abstracted speculations. From his thirst after wisdom, he is continually labouring to benefit by the knowledge of others, while he makes no account of his own sagacious administration. He listens to what every one hath to say, because it may happen that his heart may be enlightened by the communication of a just sentiment, or by the relation of a laudable action; but although a long period has elapsed in

this practice, he has never met with a person whose judgment he could prefer to his own,—nay, the most experienced statesmen, on beholding this ornament of the throne, blush at their own insufficiency, and study anew the arts of government. Nevertheless, out of the abundance of his sagacity, he will not suffer himself to quit the paths of inquiry. Although he be surrounded with power and splendour, yet he never suffers himself to be led away by anger or wrath. Others employ story-tellers to lull them to sleep; but his Majesty, on the contrary, listens to them to keep him awake. From the excess of his righteousness, he exercises upon himself both inward and outward austerities, and pays some regard to external forms in order that those who are attached to established customs, may not have any cause for reproach. His life is an uninterrupted series of virtue and sound morality. God is witness that the wise of all ranks are unanimous in this declaration.

"He never laughs at nor ridicules any religion or sect:—he never wastes his time nor omits the performance of any duty; so that, through the blessing of his upright intention, every action of his life may be considered as an adoration of the Deity. He is continually returning thanks unto Providence and scrutinising his own conduct; but he most especially so employs himself at the following stated times:—at daybreak when the sun begins to diffuse its rays,—at noon when that grand illuminator of the universe shines in full resplendence—in the evening, when it disappears from the earth,—and again at midnight when it recommences its ascent. All these grand

mysteries are in honour of God; and if dark-minded, ignorant people cannot comprehend their signification, who is to be blamed? Every man is sensible that it is indispensably our duty to praise our benefactor, and consequently it is incumbent on us to praise this Diffuser of bounty, — the Fountain of light! And more especially behoveth it princes so to do, seeing that this sovereign of the heavens sheddeth his benign influence upon the monarchs of the earth.

"His majesty has also great veneration for fire in general, and for lamps, since they are to be accounted rays of the greater light. He is ever sparing of the lives of offenders, wishing to bestow happiness upon all his subjects. He abstains much from flesh, so that whole months pass away without his touching any animal food. He takes no delight in sensual gratifications, and in the course of twenty-four hours never makes more than one meal. He spends the whole day and night in the performance of his necessary avocations, excepting the small portion required for sleep. He takes a little repose in the evening, and again for a short time in the morning. The greater part of the night is employed in the transaction of business. To the royal privacy are then admitted philosophers, and virtuous Sufees, who seat themselves and entertain his Majesty with wise discourses. On these occasions his Majesty fathoms the depths of knowledge, examines the value of ancient institutions, and forms new regulations, that the aged may stand corrected in their errors, and the rising generation be provided with fit rules for governing their conduct. There are also present at these assemblies, learned

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historians who relate the annals of past times, just as the events occurred, without addition or diminution. A considerable part of the night is spent in hearing representations of the state of the empire, and giving orders for whatever is necessary to be done in every department. Three hours before day there are introduced to the presence musicians of all nations, who recreate the assembly with vocal and instrumental melody: but when it wants only about an hour of day, his Majesty prefers silence, and employs himself at his devotions. Just before the appearance of day, people of all ranks are in waiting, and soon after day-break are permitted to make the Koornish;* next, the Haram are admitted to pay their compliments. During this time various other affairs are transacted; and when these are finished, his Majesty retires to rest for a short time."† Here is no doubt upon the whole, though the statements may be somewhat highly coloured, a very accurate account of the character of this illustrious sovereign, who fully justified by the conduct of his reign the encomiums which his wise minister has bestowed upon him. The accompanying engraving represents him standing upon a terrace with both hands resting upon a ponderous sword. Round his neck is a collar of magnificent gems, and three corresponding ones adorn his turban. In the background is introduced a portion of Futtypore Sicri, a place to which the Emperor was greatly attached. The splendid edifice seen in the background was built by him, and he enclosed the town with a stone wall. "On

* A form of salutation.

† Ayeen Akberry, vol. i. p. 202—205.

the most elevated part of the rock," says Hamilton, "stands the tomb of Shah Selim Cheestee, by the efficacy of whose devotions the Empress of Akbar, after remaining several years barren, became pregnant and bore a son, who, in honour of that saint was named Selim, and on ascending the throne of Hindostan, took the name of Jehangire."

The entrance to this beautiful mausoleum is through a court-yard, into which opens a gateway of great altitude, there being an ascent to it by a lofty flight of steps. The appearance of the gateway is imposing in the highest degree. There stands within the court a mosque of very simple structure, the whole area which the wall surrounds bearing still evident marks of that munificence which distinguished the character of Akbar. There are even now to be seen remains of much grandeur between Agra and Futtypore Sicri.

The character of this monarch was in every point of view extraordinary. He was not less distinguished for his personal prowess than for his skill in legislation, his dialectical acuteness and philosophical sagacity, of all which Abul Fazil has recorded numerous instances, and especially of the former. "Once on a hunting party, advice being brought that a lion had made its appearance in a thicket near the town, his Majesty went in quest of it.' The lion struck its claws into the forehead of his Majesty's elephant and pinned him to the ground, till the King put the lion to death, to the astonishment of every spectator. Another time, being hunting near Toodah, a lion seized one of his train, when he smote the beast with an arrow,

and delivered the man from its clutches. Another time a large lion sprang up near his Majesty, who smote it with an arrow in the forehead. Another time a lion had seized a foot soldier, and every one despaired of his life; but the Emperor set him free by killing the lion with a matchlock. On another occasion, in the wilds, a lion moved towards him in such a terrible rage, that Shujahut Khan, who had advanced before his Majesty, lost his resolution; but the King stood firm, holding the lion at defiance, when the animal through instinct, becoming frightened at Heaven's favourite, turned about to escape, but was speedily killed with an arrow. But it is impossible for me, in my barbarous Hindoo dialect, to describe in fit terms the actions of this inimitable monarch."*

The same author gives the following curious account of the manner of entrapping the lion. "They make a large cage, strengthened with iron, into which they put a kid in such a situation that the lion cannot come at it, without entering by the door which is left open. The cage is put in the place which the lion frequents, and when he enters to seize the kid, the door shuts upon him and he is taken: or an arrow is set in a bow of a green colour, which is fastened to the bough of a tree, and when the lion passes under it, the motion discharges the arrow and kills him. Or they fasten a sheep to the spot which he frequents and surround it with straw worked up with some glutinous substance, so that when the lion attempts to seize the sheep, his claws become entangled in the straw, upon which the hunters, issuing from their

* Ayeen Akberry, vol. i. p. 296.

covert,' either kill him, or take him alive and tame him; but his Majesty has ordered that the lion should always be destroyed.

"Sometimes a bold resolute fellow seats himself upon the back of a male buffalo, and makes him attack the lion and toss him with his horns till he kills him. It is not possible for any one, who has not seen this sight, to form an adequate idea of the sport it affords, nor to conceive the boldness of the man, who seats himself erect like a pillar, notwithstanding the violent motions of the buffalo, during the bloody conflict."*

The mode of catching elephants described by Abul Fazil will not be uninteresting to the English reader. "This is done several ways. One method is that which they call Kehdeh, wherein cavalry and infantry are employed. In the summer season they beat drums and blow trumpets in the place where the elephants resort to feed. The unwieldy animals are frightened and run about till their strength is quite exhausted, and in search of rest take shelter under the shade of a tree, when skilful persons throw ropes over them and fasten them to the trunk. Here they are brought acquainted with tame elephants, familiarised by degrees, and taught to be obedient. The people who take the elephants are paid a fourth of their value. There is another method called Choorkehdeh, which is this.—They carry a tame elephant to the place where the wild ones feed, the driver sitting upon him in such a manner as not to be perceived. When the two elephants begin fighting, the driver throws a rope over the wild animal. Another way is called Gedd.

* Ayeen Akberry, p. 295.

They dig a deep ditch in the path which the wild elephant usually passes, and cover it with grass. When he comes near the pitfall, the people who are in ambush make a great noise, from the dread of which the elephant precipitates himself into the excavation: here, being kept short of provisions, he is tamed by degrees. Another method is what they call Barserakh. They enclose with a ditch the place where the wild elephants usually assemble at a particular season, leaving only one entrance, to which they fix a door with ropes in such a manner that, upon slipping the ropes, it shuts fast. Next they scatter food in and about the enclosure, which entices the elephants to enter, when the people come out of their hiding-place, slip the ropes and shut the door. Sometimes elephants in their rage attempt to break open the door, when the people light fires and make a noise, during which time the elephants keep running about till their strength is quite exhausted. The tame elephants are fastened round the enclosure, and the wild ones are kept short of food until they become docile. These were the old ways of taking elephants; but his Majesty has invented a new method. A herd of male elephants are fastened to a spot in the form of a circle, and the females are brought into sight in another quarter, and men making a shout on all sides, the wild elephants run together in order to join the others. Upon this the female elephants, who are trained to the practice, enter the enclosure which is constructed for this purpose. A number of wild elephants follow them and are taken without trouble."*

* Ayeen Akberry, p. 297.

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Akbar's fondness for field sports, and his daring spirit in this dangerous amusement, will be shown in the following account by Abul Fazil, of the manner of hunting the yuz, or leopard.

"This animal, which is remarkable for its provident and circumspect conduct, is an inhabitant of the wilds, and has three different places of resort. They feed in one place, rest in another, and sport in another, which is their most frequent resort. This is generally under the shade of a tree, the circuit of which they keep very clean, and enclose it with their dung.

"Formerly a large pit used to be dug, and covered with grass. This pit was called Ordee. When the yuz stepped upon the grass he fell into the pit; but it frequently happened, that by the fall he broke a limb, or was bruised; and sometimes he jumped or climbed out; and seldom more than one was taken at a time. His Majesty has introduced a new method. They dig a pit more than two or three guz deep, and place over it a trap-door, which admits the yuz as soon as he sets his foot upon it, and then closes upon him without doing him any injury. In this manner several are frequently taken together. Once a female yuz entered the trap, and being followed by four males, they were all taken.

"Sometimes his Majesty pursues a yuz on horseback, till the animal is quite fatigued, and then lays hold of it, to the astonishment of the spectators. The following is also a method of taking them. They hang a number of iron rings, with snares, upon the trees under which the animals commonly resort, and

when they rub and scratch themselves against the tree they are entangled in the rings. The yuz is caught within forty coss (eighty miles) of Agra. In this district, whenever a yuz gets into a trap, his Majesty goes into the pit and takes it out himself. He frequently, when fatigued after a long journey, upon receiving intelligence of a yuz being entrapped, mounts his horse again, and gallops to the spot. Formerly it required two or three months to tame the yuz sufficiently to set him loose after game, but now, by the attention of his Majesty, it is effected in eighteen days. Sometimes the Emperor trains them himself. What is very astonishing, it once happened that a new-caught yuz hunted immediately upon his Majesty signifying his pleasure to it, and seized the game like one which had been trained. On this occasion the eyes of many were opened, and they believed in his Majesty's supernatural endowments. He had also a yuz who used to follow him without a collar or chain, and was as sensible and obedient as a human being."

The mode of hunting with the cheetah is thus described by the same author:—

"Some particular leopards have a dooly and a cart, and others only a dooly * each. The dooly is carried by three bearers. The yuz hunts best against the wind, as in that situation he discovers the game by the scent. There are three ways of hunting with this animal.

"First, Oopurghuttee, when they place the yuz on the right side of the game. Second, Reghnee, when

* A sort of covered litter.

they take off his chain and show him the game at a distance, whilst himself is in a covert, and he creeps along, and jumps upon the game by surprise. Third, Meharee, when they put the yuz in a covert, and drive his carriage towards the deer, which being frightened at it, fly to the quarter where the yuz is hidden, who springs upon the game and seizes it. It is impossible to describe the activity and subtle artifices of this animal. Sometimes he raises such a dust with his feet that he is entirely hidden under it, and he can bend himself so close to the ground as to be scarcely above the surface. Formerly they did not hunt with these animals more than three kinds of game, but now they take twelve different sorts.

" His Majesty ordered a skreen to be made, which is called Chuttermundel, and it serves as a hiding-place for the yuz. The hunters set up a noise, and drive the deer towards the skreen, from behind which the yuz springs out upon it. His Majesty liberally rewards the servants of this department, who may merit encouragement; and there are also particular marks of favour bestowed upon the leopards, the relation of which would run me into prolixity. The following astonishing incident occurred under this auspicious reign. A deer contracted an intimacy with a leopard, and they lived and sported together; but this particular attachment did not prevent the leopard from hunting other deer. Formerly they did not venture to let the leopard loose in the evening, for fear of his being untractable, or taking refuge in the woods; now he is so well trained, that he will hunt as well during night as in the day-time. They used also to cover

their eyes until it was time to set them at the game, from the apprehension that they would struggle to get loose immediately upon seeing it; but they are now taught to remain perfectly quiet with their eyes open. The Omrahs lay bets upon every forty leopards, and he, whose animal seizes first, wins the wager. Also, the Dooreah, or leader, whose leopard first kills twenty head of game, takes five rupees from his brethren. Syed Ahmed Barah, who is at the head of this department, takes a mohur (about thirty-five shillings) from each person who wins a bet, from which he acquires a considerable income. When an Emir presents his Majesty with twenty pair of antelope's horns, he receives a mohur from each of the other thirty-nine Omrahs. The Bundookcheean and keepers of the missels have also their respective bets. His Majesty never hunts on a Friday, in consequence of a vow which he made upon the birth of his eldest son."

The manner of hunting deer with deer, extracted from the same work, will not be found unworthy of the reader's attention.

"They fasten a snare about a tame deer, so that when a wild one engages him he is entangled by the horns and ears; upon which the hunters issue from their covert and seize him. If the tame deer is overpowered, or the snare breaks, he returns to his keeper. Sultan Firoze Kuljee had some idea of this manner of hunting, but it is only now brought to perfection. They will now hunt in the night; and if the wild deer runs away, or the snare breaks, the tame one obeys the orders of his keeper, and comes or goes

just as he directs. Formerly they were afraid to send out a tame deer at night, and whenever one was let loose it had a clog fastened to one of its legs, but now no such precaution is used. Some time ago a tame deer ran away into the wilds of the Soobah of Allahabad, and after passing many rivers and towns, travelled to his native country, Punjab, and there joined his former keeper. Formerly only two or three people partook of this sport, and, for fear of frightening the wild deer, used to disguise their persons, or hide themselves in the grass; but his majesty has introduced a method whereby upwards of four hundred people may go together. Forty oxen are taught to move slowly, and in such a manner as to conceal the people who are behind them. Does also are taught to entice the bucks into snares. A decoy deer ensnared a yuz, and they were brought together to Guzerat.

"Ghuntaheerah, is the name for another manner of hunting. A man takes in his hand a shield or a basket, so as to cover a lamp. Then, with his other hand he rings a little bell. The animals running towards the light and the noise, are shot with arrows by those who lie in wait. There is another way of assembling the game together, by a person's singing an incantation; but his Majesty considering both these methods to be nefarious, has ordered them to be discontinued.

"Taghnee. A person shows himself to the deer stark naked, making a number of foolish gestures; upon which, the deer, taking him for a madman, come near and stare at him with astonishment,

when the archers from their covert smite them with arrows.

"Another way is called Bowkareh. Some archers hide themselves in the grass in the wind's eye, whilst others hold up a large sheet like a wall, and the deer, being driven towards the sheet, are there shot with arrows.

"Ajarek, is when the archers cover themselves with green foliage, so that nothing of the human form appears, and that their bows and arrows are concealed. Another way:—The hunter hides himself in a tree; and from thence makes a noise like a deer, which brings the herd to that quarter, when he discharges his arrows upon them."

The following mode of catching water-fowl is extremely curious. "The manner of catching water-fowl is done after several ways; but the most curious is the following. They make an artificial bird with the skin and feathers of a water-fowl, the body of which is hollow, so that a man may put his head into it, and two apertures are made for him to see through. The man having put his head therein, stands in the water up to his neck; and getting amongst the birds, pulls them very dexterously under water by the legs; but sometimes they are cunning enough to escape. In Cashmere they teach a hawk to seize the birds whilst swimming, and to bring them to a man who attends in a little boat. Those which are too large for the hawk to carry, it sits upon until the boat comes to it." *

I have drawn thus copiously from the Ayeen

* Ayeen Akberry.

Akberry, because it is a work of great repute and of extreme accuracy, written by no less a man than the celebrated Abul Fazil, vizier or prime minister of Akbar's court. He was the Burleigh of his age, and contemporary with that eminent statesman. He wrote the history of his sovereign's reign down to the forty-seventh year, at which period he was assassinated by a band of robbers, on his return from the Deccan, whither he had been on some mission of importance. His History was published under the title of Akber-nameh, to which the Ayeen Akberry is a sort of supplement, although in itself a complete work; and perhaps there has been none ever produced in any language which supplies such a marvellous quantity of information relative to the immediate period of which it treats, as this to which I am now referring, and from which I have so largely quoted. It places before the reader, as in a mirror, the whole economy of the Emperor's regal, political, and social life. You behold the royal hero in all his striking transitions of character, various in its external aspect but never in its positive consistency, as if you had direct intercourse with the living man. In my judgment, it is by far the most valuable book ever written upon the subject of Akbar's reign, and certainly contains more information in a given space than any similar production with which I am acquainted. As it is a work not accessible to general readers, I have had the less scruple in making the numerous extracts, from which I trust the reader has received no less amusement than information; and such as can command access to it, I beg earnestly to refer to the work itself.

CHAPTER X.

I HAVE already said that Futtepoor Sicri was a favourite city of Akbar. It is now scarcely more than a village, a large space within the decayed wall built by the Emperor being without edifices of any kind, and many of those yet standing are in a state of melancholy dilapidation; still the traces of its former splendour may be seen in some very striking remains, as the frontispiece sufficiently attests. The neighbouring hills are composed of a greyish granite, and have evidently supplied the material of which the town is built. Here Akbar used to pass much of his time, and here he established wild beast fights which were during his reign still more celebrated than those of Lucknow have since been. Indeed these fights have in all ages, more or less, formed one of the favourite pastimes of Eastern sovereigns. To them war was a high and stirring delight, and therefore everything that had a tendency to illustrate the art of war, or to excite similar impulses, roused in their bosoms those feelings which it was the grand aim of their lives to cherish.

The Emperor Akbar was particularly fond of these sports, no less than of the chase, and his attachment to the latter, the extracts from the work of his vizier in the preceding chapter abundantly verify. In

order that he might enjoy so favourite an amusement, he erected, just without the walls of Futtepoor Sicri, a lofty minar composed of grey granite dug from the neighbouring quarries. From the top of this pillar it was his custom to behold the contentions of various wild animals snared for this purpose in the neighbouring forests, and especially of elephants, of which he kept a large number trained, and fed with exciting drugs in order to render them more fierce, and consequently more terrific, in the combat.

The town of Futtepoor Sicri stands about nineteen miles south of Agra, where the imperial court was held in the time of Akbar; and to the former town the Emperor used frequently to retire from the pressing cares of state, to enjoy those sturdy recreations so consonant to the character of a warlike prince in a country where wild animals abounded in such multitudes that their destruction became a matter of social necessity, and every social necessity must involve a political.

The minar represented in the engraving is even now in a state of good preservation. Part of the parapet of the gallery under the cupola has given way; but in every other respect it was perfectly entire at the time the drawing, from which the engraving is copied, was made. The gallery and dome by which the column is surmounted are in the purest taste of the period, being light and elegant, but extremely substantial, and forming a striking capital to the pillar that rises from a base of almost Doric plainness. By way, however, of appropriate ornament, the minar was adorned from the base to the pavilion, with which

Minar at Fattypore, Sirri

London, Published 1st. Jany. 1835 by the Proprietors by Carpenter & Son Oxford

it is crowned, with elephant's tusks projecting from the shaft at equal distances all round, and presenting a singular feature to the spectator's eye. The ascent to the gallery is by a spiral staircase within the column, lighted by small perforations at necessary intervals. In the side of the square platform on which the minar stands is a doorway, leading to a large dark chamber, where probably the beasts intended for the combat were originally confined. In the distance, to the right of the minar as you look towards the town, appears to have been the royal stable in which were kept those elephants intended for the fight, as is signified by a sculpture of two of those colossal animals on either side of the door-way.

In the time of Akbar, beyond the minar a large space was enclosed from the surrounding plain, which stretched to a considerable extent towards the river Jumna; and from the pavilion above, the principal omrahs or nobles of his court used to participate with their royal master in a pastime no less exciting to them than to him. During my stay in India I have been several times present at exhibitions of this description; but always found that they created feelings of painful disgust rather than of rational pleasure. There is something absolutely appalling in beholding those fierce animals mangling each other with all that ferocity to which Nature has so signally disposed them for those purposes of destruction, as wise as they are benignant, without which the world would be overspread with a savage and indomitable race, and no longer be a secure dwelling-place for man. The cruelties frequently practised towards such wretched

animals as are taken in order to contribute to these barbárous sports, is revolting beyond description; for it never appears to be among the contemplation of persons by whom beasts of prey are snared for the arena, that the infliction of pain upon animals which delight in human blood can be otherwise than a meritorious action; and therefore, in the fiercest spirit of retaliation, it is inflicted without mercy. Tigers and lions which have been snared in the jungles are commonly kept without food for several days, and subjected to all kinds of ingenious torment in order to render them the more savage when freed from their cages to encounter an equally formidable and savage enemy. It is a common practice to catch alligators in the large rivers and put them into tanks, with a strong iron wire passed several times round their long muzzles, and so tightened as to keep the jaws close, so that they can receive no solid food. In this state they have been known to live for weeks without perceptibly losing any of their strength. This is often done to render them voracious, preparatory to those exhibitions which take place upon certain occasions at most of the courts of the Mohammedan princes in Hindostan.

During my residence in India I once saw, in a small tank, two alligators, the jaws of which had been fastened as just described, for a period, as it was said, of more than two months. They were caught, dragged upon the bank, where, the iron ligatures being cut, they were immediately released, and feeling their freedom, both plunged with equal eagerness into the water. As they had been for

some weeks companions in suffering, neither manifested a disposition to commence hostilities, but occupied different parts of the tank, sinking to the bottom, and occasionally thrusting their noses above the surface to take breath. The water did not exceed five feet in depth, so that unless they kept the middle of the tank they might be seen as they lay at the bottom almost immovable. Though the place was crowded with spectators, the huge reptiles did not appear to be disturbed by so unusual a concourse, and even occasionally bore to be poked with a long pole before they would move from the mud in which they had embedded themselves. At length, the carcass of a sheep was thrown into the water just above where the smallest alligator lay. The voracious creature immediately rose and seized it; which it had no sooner done than its companion appeared on the surface, and with the swiftness of a shaft rushed towards its rival to participate in the tempting banquet, the turbid element dividing before it as if ploughed with the keel of a ship. In a moment both sank, and for some time the water was much disturbed, the black mud rising in considerable quantities, and an occasional splashing sufficiently attested the severity of the struggle that was taking place below. After a while one of the combatants appeared with a portion of the sheep in its jaws, which having devoured, it again sank, and the struggle was evidently renewed. In a short time the water was strongly tinged with blood, the mud continued to rise and the splashing encreased. The anxiety of the spectators was excited to the highest

pitch, when both competitors rose at different parts of the tank as if the contest had been terminated by mutual consent. The smaller alligator had a frightful gash in its throat, and the fore-leg of the larger seemed to be extensively lacerated. They both tinged the water as they swam; nevertheless, their wounds did not appear to cause either of them much suffering or inconvenience. They did not attempt further hostility.

The carcass of a second sheep, in a tempting state of decomposition,—for these creatures prefer putrid carrion to any other,—was thrown into the tank, and the struggle for supremacy renewed. It however did not last so long as the former: each having obtained a share of the prey, which divided at the slightest touch, the contest soon subsided, and both rose once more to the surface without any further appearance of injury. Their bodies appeared less lank; it was, therefore, evident that each had received a portion of the two carcases thrown between them, like the apple of discord in classic story.

On the following day, the alligators, which had already contributed to the sport of a numerous assemblage of unpitying spectators, were caught for the purpose of opposing them to foes of a different species from any they had been accustomed to encounter. They were brought into a large enclosure, within which was a cage containing a fine leopard. The gash in the throat of the smaller alligator had, as was now sufficiently apparent, greatly weakened it. The animal appeared apathetic, and did not promise much diversion to the anxious beholders.

The creatures were removed from the tank to the arena on a platform raised upon wheels and drawn by three bullocks. When rolled from the carriage both appeared almost inert, and especially the smaller one, which every now and then opened its huge mouth and gasped, manifestly suffering from the conflict of the preceding day. The leopard, so soon as it saw them, crouched upon its belly, as if conscious what it was about to be called upon to perform: when, however, the door of the cage was opened, which was done by a man in a sort of gallery above by means of a cord attached to the upper bar, the animal did not seem disposed to try the issue of a combat with antagonists at all times formidable, and in their own element invincible.

A pole being at length introduced, the leopard was irritated by being severely poked; and, with a sudden spring, bounded into the enclosure. The alligators appeared to look upon the scene with perfect indifference, remaining all but motionless on the spot where they had been cast from the platform. Their tails were occasionally seen to vibrate slightly, and especially when their brindled enemy appeared before them in a threatening attitude of attack. The leopard paused for some time with its head upon its paws, waving its tail to and fro, the fur being erected and the ears depressed, as if anxious but fearful to begin the encounter. At length, two or three crackers being flung just behind it, these had no sooner exploded than the terrified and enraged animal darted forward, and springing upon the nearest alligator, turned it over in an instant, and burying its fangs in

the throat of its victim, almost immediately despatched it, the helpless reptile appearing not to offer the slightest resistance.

Finding that it had so easily vanquished its weakest enemy, the leopard, excited by the taste of blood, having been kept without food for the three previous days, sprang upon its surviving foe, but with a very different result. The alligator, suddenly shifting its head, the brindled champion missed its spring; when the roused foe meeting it as it turned, made a sudden snap at its head, which it took entire within its capacious jaws, and crushed so severely that, when released, the leopard rolled over and died after a few struggles. The victor was now attacked by a man armed with a long spear, with which he despatched it after a feeble resistance. Thus ended this barbarous pastime.

Upon another occasion I witnessed at one of these sanguinary exhibitions, a contest between a buffalo and a tiger. The buffalo was extremely fierce, and one of the largest of its kind I had ever seen. It commenced the attack by rushing towards its adversary, which retreated to a corner of the arena, where, finding no escape, it sprang upon the buffalo's neck, fixing its claws in the animal's shoulder, and lacerating it in a frightful manner. It was, however, almost instantly flung upon the earth with a violence that completely stunned it, when there appeared a ghastly wound in the belly, inflicted by its antagonist's horn, from which the bowels protruded. The conqueror now began to gore and trample upon its prostrate enemy, which it soon despatched, and then galloped round the enclosure, streaming with

blood, the foam dropping from its jaws, its eyes glancing fire, occasionally stopping, pawing the ground, and roaring with maddened fury.

A small rhinoceros was next introduced, which stood at the extremity of the arena, eyeing its foe with an oblique but animated glance, though without the slightest appearance of excitement. The buffalo having described a circuit from the centre of the ground, plunged forward towards the rhinoceros, with its head to the earth, its eyes appearing as if about to start from their sockets. Its wary antagonist turned to avoid the shock of this furious charge, and just grazed the flank of the buffalo with its horn, ploughing up the skin, but doing no serious mischief. It now champed and snorted like a wild hog, and its eyes began to twinkle with evident expressions of anger. The buffalo repeated the charge, one of its horns coming in contact with its adversary's shoulder; which, however, was protected by so thick a mail that this produced no visible impression. The rhinoceros, the moment it was struck, plunged its horn with wonderful activity and strength into the buffalo's side, crushing the ribs and penetrating to the vitals; it then lifted the gored body from the ground and flung it to the distance of several feet, where the mangled animal almost immediately breathed its last. The victor remained stationary, eyeing his motionless victim with a look of stern indifference, but the door of his den being opened he trotted into it, and began munching some cakes which had been thrown to him as a reward for his conduct in so unequal a contest.

The next exhibition was that of three wild dogs, which were put into a lofty and spacious den, where a large bear was amusing itself by climbing a pole in the centre. Upon their admission the dogs showed the most eager impatience to reach the bear, which continued on the top of the pole, and did not manifest the slightest wish to descend and contest the honour of the victor's wreath. At length, the pole being violently shaken, he was reluctantly forced to descend and encounter his yelping foes. These instantly attacked him with extreme ferocity, making him roar with terrific energy. He scrambled to a corner of his den, where, having shaken off his assailants with some difficulty, he placed his back against the bars, and squatting himself upon his hams presented his shaggy front to the eager attack of his fierce aggressors. One of them sprang at his throat and fastened there, but was immediately caught in the sinewy embrace of the bear, and died without relaxing its hold. Meanwhile, the other two dogs had seized their antagonist by the haunches, where they fixed, and made the poor beast bellow with pain. Being encumbered by the dog, which he still held in his gripe, he could for the moment offer no resistance to his active enemies, which made the best of their opportunity, and lacerated him without remorse.

Finding the struggle too serious to be continued, the bear at last fairly turned his back towards his adversaries, lying upon his belly and covering his head with his paws. Although the dogs could not make any serious impression upon the strong hairy hide of poor Bruin, they were nevertheless unremitted in their

efforts to despatch him; these they continued until they were so completely exhausted as to be scarcely able to stand. Both lay panting beside their unresisting foe, and were finally taken off by a keeper. The bear finding himself released from further molestation, threw the dead dog which he held in his embrace on one side, and mounted the pole in the centre of his prison little the worse for the encounter.

Such are the exhibitions in which Akbar used to take great delight, though probably these amusements were encouraged by him in order to familiarize his nobles with such scenes as had a tendency to inure their hearts to those sterner feelings with which, unless a warrior in earlier times was familiar, he was supposed to be destitute of the higher attributes that constitute a hero. The Emperor, however,—notwithstanding what may be deemed his sanguinary predilections, so far as related to the destruction of wild beasts,—was by no means deficient in the social qualities of urbanity and tenderness. He was no less distinguished for his virtues as a father and husband than for his qualities as a sovereign; and although in every character he showed an inflexible determination in the pursuit of truth and in the administration of justice, he was still ever ready to reward merit and to return with manly love the affections of his kindred.

Among the numerous public works which distinguished his long and prosperous reign is a celebrated boulee, or well, near the capital of Allahabad: it is at this moment the admiration of all travellers. The circumference is about eighty feet, and its ordinary

depth from the top of the circular wall to the water perhaps between sixty and seventy. In very dry seasons the water subsides considerably; but when the rain has been extremely abundant, this, so it is said, sometimes reaches nearly to the top. Such a casualty, however, rarely occurs, if it ever did occur; for the fact does not appear to be by any means well authenticated, and little trust is to be placed in Hindoo statements, whether these be of recent events or of such as are based upon the still more doubtful authority of tradition. The well was built by Akbar for the benefit of his Hindoo subjects, to whose comforts, with a liberal and wise policy, he was ever careful to administer. Upon the summit, several yards from the brink, there is a handsome pavilion built in the peculiar style of the period. It is a hexagon, composed of two stories, the last surmounted by a small dome, from which a graceful culice rises, forming an elegant finish to the structure. There are flights of steps all round the well, one side being hewn from the solid rock; and here the stairs are cut at irregular intervals, so that the water may be reached with the most perfect convenience at all heights. Near the bottom is a terrace, under which there appears to be a chamber, two small windows looking out upon the water, which would seem to show that the spring never rises above its ordinary level. Over the terrace are entrances apparently to two other chambers, hollowed out of the living stone, the lower entrance probably affording egress to the upper plain. These excavations were most likely made by the Hindoos since the well was constructed, perhaps for the purpose of performing

their idolatrous rites in secret during the persecutions to which they were subjected under the tyranny of the less humane and less politic successors of Akbar.

This wise monarch was particularly partial to Allahabad. He was in fact the founder of the modern city, "intending it as a stronghold to overawe the surrounding countries, for which, from local circumstances, it was well adapted. In the year 1765 it was taken by the British army under Sir Robert Fletcher." *

Allahabad is considered a place of great sanctity, and is the constant resort of numerous pilgrims. "When a pilgrim arrives here, he first sits down upon the brink of the river and has his head and body shaved, so that each hair may fall into the water, the sacred writings promising him a million of years residence in heaven for every hair thus deposited. After shaving he bathes, and the same day or the next, performs the obsequies of his deceased ancestors. The tax accruing to government for permission to bathe is only three rupees for each person; but a much greater expense is incurred in charity and gifts to the Brahmins, who are seen sitting by the river side. Many persons renounce life at the holy confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, by going in a boat, after the performance of certain solemnities, to the exact spot where the rivers unite, where the devotee plunges into the stream with three pots of water tied to his body. Occasionally also some lives are lost by the eagerness of the devotees to rush in and bathe at the most sanctified spot at a precise

* Hamilton's Description of Hindostan, page 301.

period of the moon, when the expiation possesses the highest efficacy. The Bengalese usually perfor the pilgrimages of Gaya, Benares, and Allahabad during one journey, and thereby acquire great merit in the estimation of their countrymen." *

* Hamilton, page 300.

Part of Cut on the Lower Ganges

CHAPTER XI.

In the time of Akbar, the city of Oude, which now at a short distance from the river's bank presents little but a shapeless heap of ruins, is said to have been a place of much importance, and of great magnificence. It is situated upon the south side of the river Goggra, and seventy-five miles from Lucknow, the modern capital, where the king holds his court in great splendour. "Oude," says Abul Fazil in his history of Akbar's reign, "is one of the largest cities of Hindostan. In ancient times it is said to have measured a hundred and forty-eight coss (two hundred and ninety-six miles) in length, and thirty-six coss (seventy-two miles) in breadth. Upon sifting the earth which is round the city, small grains of gold are sometimes found in it. This town is esteemed one of the most sacred places of antiquity." There is nothing in the modern aspect of the town to confirm the account given by the Oriental historian, for though it occupies a considerable space along the banks of the Goggra, and contains a numerous population, it exhibits nevertheless no traces of having much exceeded in extent many towns of less note in the same district.

The ancient city of Oude, of which there still exist some striking remains, was the capital of the great

Rama, an avatar or incarnation of the Hindoo god Vishnoo. Of this notable personage "it is related that he was born near Agra, in the Tirtya Zug, or second age. His parents were, Jamadagni, whose name appears as one of the Rishis,* and Runeka. Jamadagni, in his pious retirement, was entrusted by Indra with the charge of the wonderful boon-granting cow, Kamadenu, or Surabhi; and upon one occasion regaled the Rajah Diruj, who was on a hunting-party, in so magnificent a manner as to excite his astonishment, until he learned the secret of the inestimable animal possessed by his host. Impelled by avarice,—or rather heart-hardened by the gods, who willed the Rajah's punishment should appear to be the immediate result of that base passion,—the cow was demanded from the holy Brahmin; and on refusal, force and stratagem were employed, which ended in the death of Jamadagni, but without success as to the acquisition of the desired animal, which disappeared. Runeka became a Sati; that is, burnt herself with her husband's corpse, charging the Rajah with the guilt of the double murder, imprecating curses on his head, and enjoining their valorous son Rama to avenge the death of his parents by the condign punishment of the impious Rajah, whose measure of iniquity and oppression was completed by this final atrocity.

"The prayers or imprecations of a Sati are never inefficiently uttered; the great gods themselves cannot listen to them unmoved. Vishnoo accordingly inspired Rama, who appears to have been previously

* The Rishis were seven celebrated penitents.

educated by Mahadeva* on Kailasa,† with a portion of his divinity, and sent him forth to combat the Rajah; who, after twenty battles, was slain, the military race of Khettri annihilated, and his usurped kingdoms were relieved from oppression." ‡

The ancient city of Oude having been the capital of this fictitious deity, we can readily account for the tradition of its extraordinary antiquity, extent, and magnificence. The interior of the modern town, except on the banks of the river, where the buildings are regular and uniform, presents but a sorry appearance compared with Lucknow and other cities of a similar class. Beyond the immediate neighbourhood of Oude, the aspect of the country is anything but inviting. A long tract of jungle meets the eye, with here and there huge masses of rubbish, among which are the reputed sites of ancient temples once dedicated to Rama and other worthies of the Hindoo Pantheon. The modern town is the constant resort of religious mendicants, who make pilgrimages to the shrines of those divinities and canonized mortals, whose temples are reported to have stood in the sacred vicinity. These bloated beggars, who deem every other occupation unholy, are chiefly of the Rama sect; and here they may be daily seen perambulating the consecrated spots where altars were once raised to the object of their idolatry, performing their numerous ablutions in the hallowed tanks, and going through the various mummeries imposed by the canons of their superstitious creed.

* A name of Siva, the third deity of the Hindoo triad.

† Kailasa was the paradise of Siva.

‡ Moor's Hindoo Pantheon, pp. 190, 1.

During my residence in India I saw many instances of the presumption of these mendicants, which never could happen but in a country where begging is held to be a saintly avocation. I one morning found at the door of my tent, which was enclosed by a strong railing of bamboo, a man asking alms with noisy importunity. He was young and sleek, bearing about him evident signs of good feeding and of the utter absence of privation. He was impertinently pressing, and all but demanded relief with an air and manner which expressed a determination to be satisfied. I desired him to be gone, telling him that I was not in the habit of relieving idle vagabonds who were too lazy to work for a maintenance. He looked at me for a moment in silence, and there gradually arose on his cheek a sort of defiant smile, the lip finally curling into an expression of ineffable scorn. I again desired him to quit the door of my tent, when he had the audacity to tell me that he did not beseech me to give him money for charity's sake, but only in order that he might afford a Christian the blessed opportunity of doing himself a spiritual service by administering to the sacred necessities of a Hindoo saint. He loudly declared that thousands of wretched sinners had secured for themselves an entrance into the Hindoo paradise by pampering him in his lazy occupation of mendicant, of which title he professed to be proud, saying that no truly spiritual man should labour. I became angry, and assured him that if he did not depart I would order some of my people to remove him by force. Still he only derided my threats and persisted

in his importunities, maintaining the same insolent tone of expostulation which had at first excited my indignation. I now summoned four sturdy hamauls, or palankeen-bearers, and ordered them to turn the impertinent beggar out of my compound,—the enclosure in which my tent stood. They appeared at first exceedingly reluctant to obey, the intruder threatening them with his heaviest execrations if they presumed to lay hands upon him. Seeing their backwardness, and knowing that there is nothing which the lower orders of Hindoos will not do for money, I promised them each half a rupee if they would instantly remove the troublesome saint from my sight. In a moment they seized him and hurried him beyond the boundaries of my compound, the man all the while imprecating curses upon them and me. He was not, however, to be so easily got rid of, but placed himself before the entrance, where I had no right to interfere with him, calling down the vengeance of his gods upon my head. I smiled at his impotent rage, but he would not quit the spot. There he continued incessantly abusing me, and swore that he would remain where he was until I purchased his absence by a liberal bribe. I laughed at this threat; but he stubbornly maintained his determination, keeping his post during the day, and at sunset, when I quitted my tent to dine with a friend, he saluted me as I passed with a bitter malediction. To my surprise, upon my return shortly before midnight, I found the pertinacious beggar in my path, nor was his tone in the slightest degree humbled; on the contrary, he still persisted in declaring, with the same arrogance

which had at first excited my displeasure, that he would compel me to be charitable against my will. I passed him and retired to rest, but heard his voice frequently during the night saluting my ears with the most blasphemous imprecations. Several times I ordered the hamauls to remove him, but he invariably returned; and in the morning he was on his legs, supporting himself by the bamboo fence, railing upon me with undiminished energy. This continued the whole of the second day, but towards evening I could no longer endure the thought of forcing this desperate man to an act of revenge which might cost him his life; I therefore flung him a couple of rupees, with which he instantly retired, taunting me with his triumph, until his voice was lost in the distance.

It is these wretched fanatics who exert such a baneful influence upon the Hindoo population, causing most of those terrible acts of religious frenzy, and those fearful sacrifices at the shrine of a sanguinary superstition, which so frequently degrade the civil and social institutions of this still degenerate country. They are the promoters of the many frightful penances which in this idolatrous land perpetually bring before the eye objects so dreadfully mutilated that the mind is subdued to pity, while the heart sickens with disgust. By the fanatical influence exercised by such reputed saints, the poor widow abandons her home and her offspring, and commits herself to the flames, upon the body perhaps of a husband old and licentious in life, foul and loathsome in death; nor does it appear that this odious practice is abating; on the contrary, we are informed upon

authority not reasonably to be questioned, that the prevalence of suttees has been lately encreasing throughout the province of Bengal, where they have always most abounded.

"In speaking of the suttee of yesterday," says Bishop Heber,* "Dr. Marshman said that these horrors are of more frequent occurrence within these last few years than when he first knew Bengal; an increase which he imputes to the encreasing luxury of the higher and middling classes, and to their expensive imitation of European habits, which make many families needy, and anxious to get rid, by any means, of the necessity of supporting their mothers or the widows of their relations.† Another frequent cause is, he thinks, the jealousy of old men, who, having married young wives, still cling to their exclusive possession even in death, and leave injunctions either with their wives themselves to make the offering, or with their heirs to urge them to it. He is strongly of opinion that the practice might be forbidden in Bengal, where it is of most frequent occurrence, without exciting any serious murmurs. The women, he is convinced, would all be loud in their praises of such a measure; and even of the men, so few would have an immediate interest in burning their wives, mothers, or sisters-in-law, that they would set themselves against what those who had most influence with them would be so much interested in

* See Journal, vol. i. pp. 72, 3, 4.

† What a revolting picture of society! Will there be found a greater degree of moral turpitude and social enormity even among the most degraded savages?

having established. The Brahmins, he says, have no longer the power and popularity which they had when he first remembers India, and among the laity many powerful and wealthy persons agree, and publicly express their agreement, with Rammohun Roy, in reprobating the custom, which is now well known not to be commanded by any of the Hindoo sacred books, though some of them speak of it as a meritorious sacrifice.

"A similar opinion to that of Dr. Marshman I have heard expressed by the senior judge of the Sudder Dewannee Adawlut. Others, however, of the members of the government think differently. They conceive that the likeliest method to make the custom more popular than it is, would be to forbid and make it a point of honour with the natives; that, at present, no woman is supposed to be burnt without her own wish certified to the magistrate; that there are other and less public ways to die, on that account more liable to abuse than the suttees, which might be resorted to if this were forbidden; and that if we desire to convert the Hindoos, we should above all things be careful to keep Government entirely out of sight in all the means which we employ; and to be even, if possible, over scrupulous in not meddling with or impeding those customs which, however horrid, are become sacred in their estimation, and are only to be destroyed by convincing and changing the popular mind. When Christian schools have become universal, the suttee will fall of itself; but to forbid it by any legislative enactment, would, in their opinion, only give currency to the notion that we mean to impose

Christianity upon them by force, and retard its progress to an almost indefinite period."

The incoherent mixture of fanaticism, mortification, and sensuality, in the same person is perhaps nowhere in the world so remarkable as in Hindostan. There a man is frequently seen submitting to the most rigorous penance for a long term of years, after the expiration of which he indulges in the vilest gratifications, pampering his distorted body, and exacting veneration from a host of worshippers, who are but too happy to feel upon their necks the pressure of his sacred foot.

I once saw a miserable object of this description seated just without the precincts of a Hindoo village, smeared with cowdung, and his head powdered with ashes, receiving the homage of a number of women, who had assembled round the holy man to secure the benefit of his prayers. He was an object quite offensive to behold, his naked body deformed with scars, filthy to the last degree, and so unshapely that "the human form divine" was scarcely to be recognised. One of his legs was withered and lay parallel with the thigh, the knee-joint having no action, so that the foot projected from the ham like a large pendulous excrescence. He occasionally rose and stood upon one leg with a steadiness which perfectly surprised me, remaining like a statue for several minutes without wavering for an instant. During this interval, the women crowded round him, touching the shrunken leg, and then placing their hands to their foreheads with the profoundest gestures of veneration. Among these superstitious adorers was a young maiden of great beauty, who touched the fleshless limb like the

rest, the eyes of the saint gloating on her all the while with an expression of disgusting licentiousness, but of which she appeared perfectly unconscious.

It is notorious that these monsters frequently seduce from their conjugal fidelity the most beautiful women they meet with, who think it an especial privilege to be so connected with a man who had paid by sévere penances the dreadful price of an everlasting inheritance in the paradise of their gods. When will these miserable delusions cease in a country so extensively governed by a Christian people? It is time that a change should be wrought, and it has been announced to us that such a change is in progress.

CHAPTER XII.

THE district over which the present King of Oude presides is one of the smallest provinces of Hindostan Proper. The principal rivers passing through it are the Goggra, the Goomty, and the Sye. It supplies seven thousand six hundred and sixty cavalry, a hundred and sixty-eight thousand infantry, and fifty-nine elephants, and is divided into five districts—Oude, Gorucpoor, Baraitche, Khyrabad, and Lucknow. The country is well watered and extremely productive, but the soil is badly tilled. Lapis lazuli is a production of this province; the colour procured from which sells in England at about nine guineas the ounce.

The Hindoo inhabitants of Oude are a superior race of men to those of Bengal generally, being of loftier stature, and possessing much higher qualities both moral and intellectual. The military class among them, who are Rajpoots, are not only taller, but more robust, and superior in symmetry to Europeans. They are a noble race of men, distinguished no less for their indomitable courage and impatience under wrong, than for their address in war and their extraordinary capability of endurance. Among this class the custom of infanticide* still prevails, though, I believe, to a comparatively limited ex-

* They only destroy their female children.

tent; for I am told the practice has been in a great measure abolished since the successful efforts of Mr. Duncan, when Resident at Benares in the latter part of the last century, to eradicate a custom as unnatural as it is impolitic and cruel.

I happen to recollect a remarkable fact arising out of this sanguinary practice, which took place during my residence in India. A Rajpoot, to his great mortification, had a daughter born to him. It was his first child, and the mother could not control her maternal impulses at the thought of having it barbarously sacrificed. She was, however, commanded by the stern husband—a man inflexible in adhering to the habitudes of his ancestors, however contrary to the suggestions of justice or of nature—to be the destroyer of her own babe, by forcing opium into its mouth while the unsuspecting victim was drawing nourishment from her maternal bosom. This is, or was at least, a common mode of infanticide among the Rajpoot tribes.

On the evening of the day after the infant's birth, the body of a newly-born babe being placed before the haughty father, he was satisfied that the honour of his family had been maintained by the destruction of his female offspring. He was the bravest of the brave, and moreover possessed all the high moral qualities of his tribe. He had distinguished himself in a remarkable manner in an encounter with robbers. Having been met in a remote part of the country by six men who demanded his arms, he refused to relinquish them; the six bandits attacked him simultaneously, but in a short time he laid

three of them dead at his feet, and though reeking with blood, which poured in streams from his wounds, he still continued to make such a desperate resistance, that the three surviving robbers at length quitted him, leaving him undisputed master of the field. Although desperately wounded, he eventually recovered. This happened not long after the birth of his first-born child, whose destruction he had so unfeelingly ordered the mother to perpetrate. In spite, however, of his unyielding temper, he was a kind husband,—at least, kind for one among a class who hold women to be creatures born solely for subserviency, and unworthy of that freedom which their haughty tyrants maintain to be man's natural inheritance.

About two years after the Rajpoot's marriage a son was born to him. This was an event which he was proud to commemorate by assembling to a banquet a number of his tribe, who congratulated him at his own expense upon the birth of a male offspring, held among Rajpoots as one of the most signal blessings which the Deity can confer. Within the year after its birth this child died, and the wretched father was left without an object on whom he could exhaust the outpourings of paternal love. There was at once a chasm in his heart not to be filled up. He was deeply grieved at this bereavement; and though he did not murmur at so unlooked-for a visitation, it soon became but too evident that it left a strong impression upon his mind.

One morning, having quitted his house and returned unexpectedly, he was met at the door by a beautiful little girl, which smiled in his face as he entered,

and embraced his knee with a cry of infantine delight. He was struck with the extreme beauty of the child; and from the remarkable resemblance which it bore to his wife, a thought of dark and perturbed suspicion passed through his brain with the force and rapidity of the lightning's flash. He instinctively clasped the infant in his arms and imprinted a fervent kiss upon its clear dark brow. The truth could no longer be disguised: she was his first-born, and had been saved by her mother from the death to which she had been doomed. The Rajpoot found that he was still a father. The tear started into his eye, he again pressed the little innocent passionately to his bosom; but the overflow of emotion was quickly arrested by sterner feelings. He dashed the liquid crystal from his cheek with agitated eagerness, and frowned upon the preserver and mother of his offspring. She had deceived him. This was a mortal offence in the estimation of a Rajpoot, who held deception to be the foulest dishonour. His child had been saved from destruction, and he gladly beheld her alive; but the mother of that child had forfeited his confidence. A few days after, his wife was borne a corpse to the funeral pile;—she became the victim of maternal love.

The province of Oude has been now so long under the Mohammedan dominion, that a large proportion of its inhabitants are worshippers of the Arabian prophet. From these and the Rajpoot portion of the population some of the Company's best troops are obtained. Those sepoy regiments chiefly composed of Rajpoots are by far the best in the Company's service. When their national prejudices are not

interfered with, and their social customs are respected, they prove most faithful and tractable soldiers, and for bravery are certainly unequalled as a class by any other race of men, not only in India, but in any part of the world. Where, however, the local native governments under whose domination they are placed become lax in their administration of the laws, and these haughty Hindoos are allowed to feel that the dominant authority does not apply the check of restraint, they are apt to be turbulent and refractory subjects. Such too is the low opinion in which they generally hold the supremacy of their native princes, that they frequently not only refuse obedience, but defy the authority they nominally acknowledge. Thus the petty sovereignties to which they are professedly subject are too commonly in a state of the greatest political anarchy.

This, in fact, was the case in the province of Oude prior to the supervision of that district by the East India Company. The country abounded with robbers; every individual, therefore, armed himself as a precaution for self-defence,—for no traveller could pass beyond any of the towns without the risk of being attacked. All the peasants consequently wore arms; and whilst they scattered the seed in the furrow, their hands grasped the sword or spear, and their backs were covered with the shield. As they were always prepared to repel aggression, they were no less ready for plunder when opportunity tempted them to relieve their poverty by an act of illegal appropriation. In proportion as impunity prevailed this lawless licence increased, until at length the whole province became

a scene of perpetual violence, outrage, and devastation.

This state of things was at length ameliorated by the intervention of the British supremacy in India, and finally put a stop to by the Company taking the sovereignty of Oude under their protection. A treaty was concluded on the tenth of November 1801, by which the Newaub ceded to the British Government certain portions of his territory, yielding a gross revenue of thirteen millions five hundred and twenty-three thousand four hundred and seventy-four rupees, on condition that it would relinquish every financial or other claim upon that state.

As an equivalent for these cessions, which in the year 1813 yielded an additional revenue of four millions of rupees, the English Government undertook to defend the dominion of Oude from all foreign invasions, and to subdue the internal anarchy into which the country had so unhappily fallen. It was thus soon released from all foreign and domestic enemies, and restored to perfect tranquillity in consequence of the awe inspired by its European allies.

"Oude is much celebrated in Hindoo history as the kingdom of Dasaratha, the father of the great Rama, who extended his empire to the island of Ceylon, which he conquered. At an early period after the first invasion it was subdued by the Mohammedans, and remained, with different vicissitudes, attached to the throne of Delhi, until the dissolution of that empire after the death of Aurungzebe. The first ancestor upon record of the present reigning family was Saadet Khan, a native of Rishapoor, in the province of Kho-

rassan, who was appointed Soubahdar of Oude during the reign of Mohammed Shah. He was succeeded by his nephew, Sefdar Jung, who died Anno Domini 1756, when the throne was ascended by his son, Shuja-ud-Dowlah, who reigned until the year 1775. On his decease, his son, Asoph-ud-Dowlah, was his successor, and reigned until 1797, when he was succeeded for a short time by a spurious son, named Vizier Ali, whose illegitimacy being discovered, he was dethroned by Lord Teignmouth, and the government confided to the late Newaub's brother, Saadet Ali, who was proclaimed Vizier of Hindostan and Sovereign of Oude on the twenty-first of January 1798."*

"Saadet Khan, ancestor of the present King of Oude, commenced life as a private horseman in the imperial service, in which humble station he was noticed by the Syuds, who then controlled affairs at Delhi, and was by them promoted to the command of the fortress of Biana. He nevertheless joined a conspiracy formed against his patrons, and was one of those who drew lots which should first attempt the assassination of the elder Syud. To the success of that plot he owed his elevation to the government of Oude, to which he was appointed by the Emperor during the same year, 1722. He bore a large share in the troubles of the period, but the actions nearest his end are worthy of remark. Nadir Shah, the Persian invader, having defeated the imperial forces on his advance towards Delhi, and the Ameer-ool-

* Hamilton's Description of Hindostan, vol. i. p. 339.

Omrah being killed in the battle, the surviving nobles submitted to the conqueror, who appointed Nizam-ool-Moolk to the vacant dignity, to the disappointment of Saadet Khan, who seems to have expected it. The conqueror demanded an enormous ransom for the city, which Nizam-ool-Moolk, as chief of the nobles, was collecting, when the recreant Saadet Khan, to undermine his rival and conciliate the conqueror, magnified the wealth of Delhi and occasioned an additional fine, the difficulty in levying which brought on a quarrel between the inhabitants and Nadir's troops, and a few Persians being slain, the city was given up to indiscriminate massacre and pillage. Saadet Khan, finding that his ambition had brought on so much evil without any benefit to himself, took poison. He was succeeded by his nephew and son-in-law, Abdool Munsoor Khan, who in turn was succeeded by his son, Shuja-ud-Dowlah, the first of the family who came in contact with the British government." *

The present King of Oude succeeded his father in the year 1827. "He is styled His Majesty Aboo Nuseer, Kootub-ud-Deenh, Solimon Jah, Zuman Padshah, King of Oude. He was at the time of his accession about twenty-six years of age, and is described, in Captain Mundy's interesting 'Sketches of India,' as a plain, vulgar-looking man, about the middle stature, with a complexion unusually dark, and his mental endowments, pursuits, and amusements by no means of an elevated or dignified order.

* Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, p. 72, 3.

"The King of Oude is too dependent to be regarded as one of the political states of India; but as his surplus revenues are said to exceed half a million sterling, after defraying the expenses of his government, and a court maintained in all the magnificence of Eastern parade, he may be considered the richest prince in the world, and, as such, possessing a power to do much good or evil." *

The description alluded to as given by Captain Mundy is as follows:—"The King, Nuseer-ood-Deen Hyder, is a plain, vulgar-looking man about twenty-six years of age, his stature about five feet nine inches, and his complexion rather unusually dark. His Majesty's mental endowments, pursuits, and amusements are by no means of an elevated and dignified order; though his deficiencies are in some measure supplied by the abilities and shrewdness of his minister, who is, however, an unexampled rogue, displaying it in his countenance with such perspicuity of development as would satisfy the most sceptical unbeliever in Lavater. He is detested by all ranks, with the exception of his royal master, who reposes the most perfect confidence in him."

Captain Mundy's authority here is evidently that of a man who observes superficially and thinks rashly. He asserts merely of the King what he does not show to be the fact, and finds an index of the minister's mind and heart traced upon his skin. This is about one of the weakest delusions upon which a sensible man can attempt to base a rational conclusion.

* Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, p. 80.

The "King of Oude does not merit the extremely inconclusive and somewhat groundless imputation here made. He is known to be a liberal encourager of art and of literature; and this alone should secure his name from the sweeping charge which Captain Mundy has, no doubt without due consideration, preferred against him. He is moreover at all times courteous and hospitable in the highest degree to Europeans, whom he receives at his court with the most marked respect, as will appear from Captain Mundy's own account immediately following the very passage in which he so harshly characterises him.

Saadet Khan, the ancestor of the present king, is said by the author of the "Historical Sketch of the Princes of India," but upon what authority does not appear, to have been the author of the memorable massacre at Delhi during the possession of that city by the troops of Nadir Shah. As this was one of the most melancholy events to be found among the modern records of nations, Sir John Malcolm's account of it in his History of Persia may not be unwelcome to the reader.

"Nadir Shah entered the capital* on the eighth of March, and on that and the two succeeding days all was quiet; but on the night of the tenth it was reported that Nadir was dead. This report, first circulated by some designing persons, instantly spread, and a thoughtless mob made a furious assault on the Persians, who were scattered about the town as safeguards. Being divided in small parties, and quite unsuspicious of attack, they were almost all

* Delhi.

murdered; and we must cease to pity the nobles of Delhi, when assured by concurring authorities, that most of those at whose palaces troops were stationed for their protection gave them up without effort to the fury of the populace, and even in some instances assisted in their destruction.

"Nadir, when he first heard of this tumult, sent several persons to explain to the populace their delusion and their danger; but his messengers were slain. He remained with all the Persians he could assemble in his palace till the day dawned, when he mounted his horse and rode forth to endeavour by his presence to quell the tumult. But his moderation only inflamed those whom even Indian historians inform us it was his desire to spare; and he at last gave his troops, who had arrived from their camp near the city, orders for a general massacre. He was too well obeyed: the populace, when the Persians began to act, lost all their courage, and from sunrise till noon Delhi presented a scene of shocking carnage, the horrors being increased by the flames, which now spread to almost every quarter of the city.

"Nadir, after issuing the fatal orders, went into the small mosque of Roshun-ood-Dowla, near the centre of the city, and remained there in a deep and silent gloom which none dared to disturb. At last, the unhappy Mohammed Shah, attended by two of his ministers, rushed into his presence, exclaiming, 'Spare my people!' Nadir replied, 'The Emperor of India must never ask in vain;' and he commanded that the massacre should cease. The prompt obedience given to this command is remarked by all his his-

torians as the strongest proof of the strict discipline he had introduced.

"The number of persons slain on this occasion has been differently estimated, and from the nature of the scene it could not be correctly ascertained. An author* who has been often referred to, conjectures that about a hundred and twenty thousand perished; while another European writer† nearly doubles this amount. But a respectable Indian historian‡ reduces the number to eight thousand; and there is reason to conclude that this number is nearest the truth. Two nobles who were supposed to have caused the riot, fled, with conscious guilt, to a small fortress near Delhi. They were pursued, taken, and put to death, with those who were deemed their accomplices, amounting to about four hundred persons."§

* Frazer's History of Nadir Shah, p. 185.

† Otther.

‡ Scott's translation of the History of the Deccan.

§ Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii. pp. 32, 3.

CHAPTER XIII.

All Mohammedan sovereigns in India, whether dependant or supreme, from the time of Akbar to the present, have evinced a decided partiality for those exhibitions in which that celebrated monarch took such delight; and the elephant fights of Lucknow have been notorious ever since the Mohammedan princes first established their courts in that city. Whenever the present king of Oude is visited by any European of note, he always has an elephant fight by way of entertaining his guests.

The engraving represents one of these entertainments in a large area railed in for this purpose, where likewise wrestling and other gymnastic feats are displayed before the monarch. The manner of conducting these sports is as follows:—A female elephant is introduced and led to the centre of the enclosure, where she stands upon a gentle elevation, looking around her with an evident consciousness of what is about to take place. The two male combatants are now driven in at different entrances.

The bodies of these pampered animals are covered with a strong rope netting, to which the mahoots cling during the shock of contention; and this is frequently so violent as to dislodge them in spite of their utmost efforts to prevent such an issue,

exposing them to imminent peril ;—indeed, those unfortunate persons are occasionally trodden to death by the angry elephants when thrown from their necks or haunches. Sometimes they are struck down by the trunks of the enraged animals whilst encouraging or goading them to the combat: they, however, generally contrive to evade such disasters, by retreating towards the tails of their respective charges, as these latter meet in full encounter.

So soon as the huge antagonists see the female they immediately trot towards her; but, coming in sight of each other, there is usually a pause, during which the shaking of the tail, the flapping of the ears, and the lifting of the trunk, manifest a state of extreme disquiet. The object of contention does not attempt to quit her post, but stands, with evident tokens of pleasure, mutely contemplating the approaching struggle. After a short interval one of the elephants rushes to the encounter; and when both meet, the shock is always tremendous. The tusks come into stunning collision, and with so loud a shock as to be heard at a distance of several hundred yards, the concussion being so tremendous as to raise the two gigantic champions off their fore legs. After they have met, the contest sometimes becomes terrible in the extreme. They grasp one another's trunks, butting with their heads, and occasionally raising a shrill cry of the fiercest rage. The female, meanwhile, does not offer to interpose, but calmly surveys the combat, as if with the gratifying consciousness that her presence stimulates her gallant rivals to maintain the desperate struggle for victory.

After a while the weakest elephant invariably gives way; for, the moment these creatures become sensible of their inferiority, they seem at once to be aware that the chances of success are against them, and immediately relinquish the encounter. When this is the case, they usually turn, and make a sudden retreat, pursued by the victor, which sometimes applies his tusks so forcibly to the rear of his retreating adversary as to leave indelible marks of his strength, and frequently to shake the mahoot from the net-work, to which he had clung during the contest.

When the elephants are equally matched, they continue striking at each other's heads, bringing their tusks into such violent contact as often snaps them close to the jaw; thus, in a manner, disabling the sufferer for the rest of its life, as the jaw generally becomes diseased after so severe a fracture, and in many cases to such an extent that it is found necessary to destroy the animal.

When the contest appears likely to terminate fatally, rockets are thrown between the competitors. Of these they have a great dread; nevertheless, in some instances, so implacable is their fury, that the rockets fail to separate them; in which case they are attacked in the rear with long spears by men on horseback, who strike them so sharply that they turn upon their assailants, whom they pursue with all the rage of baffled determination, often putting the horses of their tormentors to their utmost speed ere the latter can escape the threatened vengeance of their maddened pursuers. The female is now withdrawn, and the object of excitement being no longer in view,

the mahoots have little difficulty in persuading their charges to retire peaceably from the scene of contention.

The engraving represents the King of Oude and his company looking from the balcony of a bungalo upon the struggle between two favourite elephants. It gives a very accurate idea of the manner in which these gigantic animals assault each other. They are supposed just to have commenced the encounter. The dust raised by their mighty struggles occasionally shrouds them from the sight of the spectators; while the din and confusion produced by the shouts of attendants, and the thronging of so great a multitude, many of whom climb over the bamboo palisades and drop into the area within, altogether baffles description.

I remember once seeing, at an entertainment of this kind, three wild buffaloes driven into the arena against an elephant. In order to render them the more fierce, crackers were fastened to their tails. During the explosion of these, the terrified animals ran to and fro as if in a state of frenzy, and one of them charged the elephant, which stood in a corner of the square, with the blind and misguided fury of madness. The colossal creature watched his victim as it plunged desperately forward, calmly awaiting its approach with his head depressed, and the point of his tusks brought to a level with the shoulders of his advancing foe. The buffalo rushed onward, and was almost instantly impaled; the elephant casting the writhing body from his tusks, and then coolly crushing it with his fore feet.

The two other buffaloes, having now somewhat re-

covered from the terror excited by the crackers, which had hitherto diverted their attention from the elephant, gazed wildly round the enclosure, and, seeing their enemy prepared for a charge, pawed the ground, raising the dust, and flinging the earth over their heads with their hoofs in a continued shower; then erecting their tails, with a loud roar they simultaneously charged the elephant, which still remained in the corner where he had at first stationed himself. He eyed them with a deliberate but keen glance, placing his head, as before, towards the ground, and bringing those terrible instruments of destruction with which his jaws were armed in a position to meet the charge of his foremost foe. The result was precisely the same as in the former attack, the buffalo being instantly transfixed upon the elephant's tusks; but before the victor could release them from their incumbrance, the second buffalo was upon him. With the quickness of thought, however, he raised his fore leg and struck his assailant between the horns, rolling it over and instantly crushing it to death.

It sometimes, indeed, happens in these encounters, when the elephant is timid, which is the natural character of this animal, that he is dreadfully gored by his furious assailants, to which he offers no resistance, but flies from them in the greatest terror. An old elephant is generally too wary and too conscious of his own strength to allow himself to be subdued by such inferior adversaries, and when he offers a resolute resistance, the buffaloes invariably fare the worst. But at these cruel exhibitions, however the contest terminates, there is much more dis-

tress than enjoyment experienced—at least, by European spectators, to whom the sight of a violent death inflicted even upon animals which they naturally hold in dread is, in most cases, a spectacle altogether shocking to the better feelings of humanity. On the occasion to which I have just referred, after the contest between the elephant and buffaloes, a bear was introduced before the party assembled to witness the sports, and a man undertook to encounter it without any arms, save a gauntlet made of buffalo horn, called a jetty, and described at length in the third volume of this work.

The bear was a large one of its species, and had been kept without food for two days, in order to render it the more fierce. When first released from its den, it paced the ground with a sullen aspect, occasionally looking up at the spectators and uttering a low dismal roar, but showed no symptoms of positive exasperation. The moment the man entered, it paused, erected itself on its hind legs, and yelled loudly. The Hindoo was a tall powerful young man, with extremely long arms, a fine expansive chest, and a clear beaming eye, expressive of cool determination and wary caution. He first commenced operations by walking round his adversary, sometimes advancing, then retreating—now quickening his pace, then suddenly stopping, all the while distracting the attention of his angry foe by numerous contortions of body, occasionally clapping his hands, striking his chest, and springing from the ground with an agility which would have surprised the most accomplished "maître de ballet" in Europe.

His shaggy opponent at length becoming enraged, advanced upon him with a shriek of rage, and extended a paw to grasp his hip; but the Hindoo, with the rapidity of lightning, planted a blow upon the bear's cheek, which cut open the skin, and sent Bruin staggering several paces backwards. The poor animal seemed for a moment stunned with surprise, and before it could recover it received another tremendous hit on the muzzle, which caused it to turn and run to the corner of the enclosure. After shaking its nose and sneezing, it once more erected its body, having now its back supported by the bamboo railings. The man tried by all sorts of gesticulations, suddenly retreating and falling down, to draw his adversary from its position, but in vain. The animal was evidently aware of the advantage of presenting to its antagonist only one point of attack, and therefore would not budge from its corner; but, covering its head with its large shaggy paws, the Hindoo champion found it extremely difficult to deliver a blow where it would be likely to be effectual. Finding that he could not rouse the bear, he sprang forward and gave it a smart kick in the flank: this caused the animal suddenly to depress its paws; in an instant, the jetty was rattling on its head with a severity which caused it to yell for several seconds. It now lay on the earth with its muzzle in the corner, and its back towards its conqueror, who, disdaining to strike a fallen enemy, made his salaam to the spectators with a grace peculiar to all the Eastern races, and retired from the scene of combat amidst their unanimous acclamations. The bear was a good deal

punished, but its skull was too hard to be cracked with the blow of a fist.

This defeat of the bear was followed by an exhibition of a different order. A slight but firm ladder, composed of bamboo, was placed upright on the ground within the area, a strong pole crossing the top at right angles; from the end of this pole two stout cords depended, which were tightened to stay the ladder, the ends being staked into the ground in such a manner that the apparatus could not give way. A small muscular Hindoo was then introduced, naked to the waist, dressed only in a pair of short white trousers, which extended half way down his thighs. The muscles of his arms were of prodigious size, while those of his legs were small in the comparison. He wore no turban, but a gay skull-cap composed of yellow and pale blue silk. From each ear depended a large plain gold ring.

Upon entering, the little man made his salaam to the audience; then, rubbing his palms together for a few moments, he bounded towards the ladder, and, grasping the first bar above his head with both hands, mounted with astonishing activity, keeping his feet all the while perfectly motionless, and at least six inches from the frame. Having raised himself by his hands alone to the transverse pole, by a sudden jerk of his body he threw his feet upward, and was in a moment seen resting upon his head with his arms crossed over his bosom and his legs closed, forming an inverted triangle from the shoulders to the toes. He continued in this position for upwards of a minute without the slightest motion, appearing as if he had been

suddenly converted into stone, amid the shouts of an applauding multitude. When he had sufficiently rested himself after the toil of climbing, a strong cord was flung to him from below, which he caught, and drew from the ground a ball, apparently about six pounds weight, of solid iron: it was enclosed in a stout netting of twine, to which the cord was securely attached.

Having drawn up the ball to within about three yards from his hand, the dexterous Hindoo, who remained still upon his head, gradually swung it backward and forward until he was able to describe the entire circle, when, swinging it round three several times, he elanced it from his grasp, sending it over the heads of the spectators to the distance of seventy-five paces, at least sixty yards. He now lowered his legs, and placed himself upon his back along the pole. When he had perfectly secured his equilibrium, six creases or daggers, with broad double-edged blades, were thrown to him; these he caught successively with great dexterity, still maintaining his horizontal position upon the transverse bamboo. When he had possessed himself of the six daggers, he threw them one after the other several yards above his head, catching them as they fell, four always being in the air at the same instant; and this he continued for the space of at least two minutes, at length letting them drop one by one on his body, the handle invariably coming in contact with it, and the blade being always uppermost.

The performer next took an iron rod about three feet long, and, standing erect upon the pole, placed the

rod in the centre, and upon the top of it a shallow wooden bowl. With a sudden spring he seated himself in the bowl, balancing the rod so accurately that it did not appear to move a hair's breadth out of the perpendicular. In this situation twelve brass balls were flung to him; these he caught and projected into the air, keeping them in perpetual motion for several minutes: he then sprang upon his feet, standing in the bowl, without allowing a single ball to reach the ground. When this had been continued for another interval of two or three minutes, he leaped upon the bamboo, the iron rod and its wooden crown falling at the same instant to the ground. The little man concluded this clever exhibition by descending the ladder upon his hands head foremost amid the shouts of the assembled multitude.

After several other displays of skill, the sports were concluded by a native throwing a quoit at a mark with astonishing force and precision. The quoit used on this occasion was somewhat flatter than that generally employed in the rustic games of Europe: it was more delicately shaped, and had a sharp cutting edge all round the exterior circle. The quoit-thrower was a short but stout man, nearly as black as an African, his whole body covered with hair, and his countenance extremely stern and forbidding.

A wooden frame being placed at one end of the enclosure, with three white lines marked upon it, an inch and a half broad, the quoit-thrower stood at least twenty yards from the mark, and having fixed the quoit upon the fore finger of his right hand, he whirled it round for several seconds, and then discharged it

with amazing velocity at the wooden frame, striking the centre line, and impelling it above an inch into the wood, in which the disk stuck so firmly as to require a considerable tug to withdraw it. This he repeated twice, striking the second and third white lines with equal dexterity and force.

A pine-apple was next suspended from a pole at the same distance, at which the man discharged his missile, cutting the fruit completely through the centre; thus showing that this simple instrument may be used with great effect in native warfare, in which it is occasionally employed.

The natives of Hindostan are celebrated throughout the east for their feats of manual skill: in these I think they are unequalled by the inhabitants of any other country. Their strength, too, in some instances is perfectly amazing, when we consider the homely diet upon which they feed, and the attenuating climate in which they dwell.

BOMBAY BRANCH
JACKSON
MEMORIAL
COLLECTION.
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER XIV.

THE accompanying engraving is the portrait of a Malabar Hindoo well known on the coast at the time it was taken as a wealthy money-lender, and possessing an uncommonly keen sagacity in his vocation. This is sufficiently indicated in his small, bright, calculating eye. The distended nostril and compressed lip bespeak active thought and rapid conclusions; the immense expansion of forehead would betoken a sufficient mass of brains to devise plans of profit; while the strong severe features bespeak a forward determination to execute. The hand grasping the cummerbund is characteristic of the one absorbing interest occupying the man's mind, for it is usual in India to conceal money in that part of the dress; and no doubt the money-lender, when moving from place to place upon the engagements of his business, was frequently in the habit of placing his gold mohurs in that capacious depository.

Persons of this description in Malabar lend their money at exorbitant interest, and are perhaps the most remorseless creditors in the world if payment is not made at the time stipulated. They are fond of litigation almost to idolatry, — in fact, it occupies their hearts next to their idols; and it would almost seem that they lend their money where there is little

prospect of repayment for the mere gratification of having it in their power to cast the debtor into prison, and to pursue him with cold unsparing vengeance during the rest of his days, unless he should escape the tyranny by outliving the tyrant; and even then it frequently happens that the obligation of continuing the persecution is entailed with the gold of the persecutor.

These money-lenders are generally influenced by no feelings of honour. In all their dealings it is their aim to overreach those who may require pecuniary aid,—and they are generally successful. The obligations of honesty are not recognised; and even should detection ensue, it would not in the slightest degree abate the influence which money in Hindostan, perhaps above all other places in the world, confers upon its possessor: nor would the usurer consider himself morally degraded in lying under the imputation of fraud, since this is held to be an allowable stroke of policy, though the direct violation of a moral law.

The lies to which persons of this class descend, and indeed all native retail traders in India, when engaged in dealings to which they only look for exorbitant profit, would far transcend in depth of hue and in plausible ingenuity those resorted to by the ever-notorious chafferers of Rosemary-lane and similar localities in London. Their success in business is always in proportion to their craft, which is generally consummate; and so bland are their manners, until the victim is within their power, that you are almost invariably disarmed by the mild, courteous, and

seducing address with which they go through the subtile course of their negotiations. If you become angry at their exorbitant terms, they endure your abuse with a suavity and gentle assumption of dignity which at once disarm your rage and restore your confidence.

Malabar was one of the last places conquered by the Mohammedan arms, having been governed by its own native princes until the year 1766, when it fell under the dominion of Hyder Ally: the original manners and customs of the Hindoos have consequently been preserved in greater purity here than in almost any other part of India. Within the last half century the Mohammedan population has increased to a great extent; still their number collectively is far inferior to that of the Hindoos, who retain their original habits without molestation from the more warlike strangers who have settled among them, and by whom they have been subdued.

The native population of Malabar is divided into five classes, — Brahmins, Nairs, Tiars, Malears, and Poliars. The first, of course, constitute the sacred order; the second, for the most part, the military class,—though there are numerous exceptions, the Nairs frequently occupying themselves in trade and different domestic employments. The Tiars are the cultivators of the soil, to which occupation they exclusively confine themselves. The Malears are the lowest caste, being musicians and jugglers, and are generally a profligate race, often undertaking to "conjure a man dead," as they term it; which literally signifies,

to poison him. The Poliars are slaves attached to the soil.

The system of distances to be observed by these several classes is as follows:—"A Nair may approach, but not touch, a Brahmin. A Tiar must remain thirty-six yards off; a Poliar, ninety-six steps off. A Tiar is to remain twelve steps from a Nair; a Malear, three or four steps further; a Poliar, ninety-six steps. A Malear may approach, but not touch, a Tiar. A Poliar is not to come even near to a Malear, or to any other caste: if he wishes to speak to a Brahmin, Nair, Tiar, or Malear, he must stand at the above prescribed distance, and cry aloud to them."*

Perhaps there is no part of India where the rigid laws of caste are retained with a more bigoted and unrelaxing spirit than in the province of Malabar, occasioned no doubt by the little comparative intercourse held here with strangers until their subjugation by the Mohammedan forces under Hyder. This at once opened a freer communication with different races, who have in some degree subdued those stubborn prejudices which formerly existed, and even now indeed continue to exist to a great extent, especially beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the coast, where communion with aliens is naturally less limited, and where the temporal interest of the bigoted natives, that talismanick subverter of narrow opinions in every country, breaks the fetters of ceremonial restraint, flinging men of opposite creeds into social contact, in

* Hamilton's Description of Hindostan, vol. ii. pp. 278, 9.

defiance of fanatical prejudice and religious detestation.

The Nairs of Malabar are pure Sudras, who form, in fact, the third of the great social divisions among the Hindoo population: but throughout the southern coast of the peninsula there is no distinct class between them and the Brahmins. They all claim to be soldiers by birth, yet have no objection to adopt any trade or profession by which their social condition is likely to be improved. There are various gradations of rank among them; but the aristocracy of their tribe is composed of cooks, who hold all other classes in proud contempt, as the Hindoo sacred canons enjoin that every person should eat food prepared by a person of higher rank than himself: the office of cook, therefore, is held to be one of supereminent dignity by the idolaters of Hindostan.

From the class of Nairs the militia of the country are draughted, and governed by petty princes, who assume the title of Rajah. Though, prior to their subjugation in 1776, they were remarkable for their submission to superiors, their arrogance towards those whom the distinction of caste placed beneath them was in proportion. A Nair did not hesitate to kill any one below him in the civil grade who happened to come into immediate contact with his person. This was considered by the native authorities as a justifiable act of retaliation, and therefore passed with impunity. The Poliar was almost invariably subjected to this terrible penalty if, on meeting a Nair, he did not turn out of the path and allow his superior to pass without exposing him to

the chance of defilement by the shadow of a slave darkening the ground over which he was to tread.

The Nairs marry before they are ten years of age; and from the moment of their marriage, the wives are allowed by their husbands an unlimited licence: there consequently prevails among them the most revolting licentiousness. They submit to no moral restraints, but violate the restrictions of caste whenever any appetite is to be gratified, being profligate and drunken to the last degree.

The Tiars, who form a considerable portion of the population of this province, are, on the contrary, an extremely industrious and well-organised body, their habits being very superior to those generally observed among the lower orders of Hindoos. They wear little clothing, but are so cleanly in their persons, that cutaneous eruptions are extremely rare among them; the leprosy being almost unknown except among the wretched Poliars, who live principally upon garbage, and often share with the alligator, the vulture, and the jackal, that carrion which no other animal will devour. The Tiar women are exceedingly beautiful: I am satisfied that, as a race, they are scarcely approached, certainly not surpassed, in beauty of feature and symmetry of form by any class of women on the face of the earth. They are moreover quite different in their general habits from the Nairs, being almost universally strict in performing their domestic obligations, and manifesting a high appreciation of social enjoyment.

The Malears are upon the whole a despicable people, being all vagrants, either travelling musicians or

tramping conjurors. It often happens that when a person wishes to get rid of any one who had offended him mortally, he applies to one of these jugglers, who generally contrives to put the offending party to silence by poison, making it appear that he had brought about his death by supernatural agency, which is generally believed to be the case, the native authorities seldom taking the trouble to investigate a matter when from such investigation there accrues no personal benefit. About thirty years ago a circumstance of this kind occurred in the neighbourhood of Tellichery, which made some noise, as I have heard, at the time, but was no doubt soon forgotten, for such events in India do not long disturb the peace either of Hindoo or Mohammedan society.

A wealthy Portuguese had excited the hostility of a profligate Nair by winning from him, in some gambling transaction, a large sum of money which the loser was unable to pay. The winner pressed him hard for a settlement, and threatened legal proceedings. The Nair, finding the matter becoming serious, applied to a travelling juggler to transport the soul of the Portuguese to the lowest regions of Neraka,* where he should receive an appropriate punishment for having dared to demand the liquidation of a money debt from a faithful worshipper of Vishnoo and the three hundred and thirty million gods of the Hindoo Pantheon. This sordid Malear readily undertook to send the soul of the presumptuous Portuguese on a journey to perdition for the sum of two hundred

* One of the Hindoo hells.

and fifty rupees, amounting to twenty-five pounds sterling, and promised that within twenty-four hours after the payment of the sum stipulated, the offender should no longer be an inhabitant of this world. The bargain was concluded, the money paid, and on the evening of the following day the bloated body of the Portuguese was cast on shore by the tide below the walls of Tellichery.

The relatives of the murdered man had sufficient influence to procure a rigid inquiry into the cause of the latter's death; the Nair, being suspected, was immediately apprehended and brought before the judicial authorities of the town. These were bribed by a liberal fee to do their duty, and the Nair, when pressed, denounced the Malear as the immediate perpetrator of the crime. The man was accordingly arrested and brought to trial; but he denied the fact with sturdy assurance, threatening to visit his prosecutors with his mysterious power if he were not instantly released. The timid justiciaries were so awed by the menaces of this potent conjuror, that they acquitted him without hesitation. The relatives of the murdered man were, however, unexpectedly avenged. Two days after, the Nair was found dead upon the sea-shore. The juggler had thus fatally retaliated his own treacherous impeachment.

CHAPTER XV.

I AM now about to give a remarkable narrative of a Malabar Brahmin, related to me whilst I was in India by a native servant who lived with me at Bombay. This Brahmin, who was a young man, had a beautiful wife about sixteen years of age. She was the admiration of the neighbourhood in which she resided, and her husband loved her with a fervour equal to her beauty. Indeed, they entertained a mutual affection for each other; their domestic happiness was therefore far greater than is generally found to result from Hindoo marriages, which are not often productive of much domestic peace, the wives looking upon their husbands as tyrants, and the husbands treating their wives as mere drudges. This is the common feeling among married couples in Hindostan, whether Mohammedans or Hindoos.

The young Brahmin and his lovely consort, however, were exceptions to this general rule. They were happy in the reciprocal interchange of affection, and neither looked for enjoyment beyond the precincts of their domestic hearth. The fame of the Brahminee's beauty had spread far beyond the boundaries of the village in which they dwelt; and the husband was not a little proud to find that he possessed a treasure which gained him the envy of many

whose domestic happiness was mixed up with the most offensive alloy, and who would therefore have gladly purchased at any cost a similar jewel to that which had fallen into his possession.

The youthful Brahminee was a subject of daily conversation among idlers in the bazaar, where songs were sung to her beauty, at which the pride of an adoring husband kindled, and the natural vanity of his wife was excited beyond the controlling influence of prudence. Conscious of the interest she excited, she was unable to resist the temptation of showing herself, when she could do so without violating the rigid forms by which in the East female society is almost universally governed. Wherever she appeared, she arrested the admiration of all who saw her; and, contrary to the general character of his caste, her husband was pleased at her being seen, as much as was consistent with the restrictions imposed upon all Hindoo women of the superior classes.

One morning the young Brahminee had repaired to a tank, as usual, to perform her customary ablutions. It was in a retired spot, and the hour so early that she entertained no fears of interruption, as she had never yet been offensively intruded upon whilst performing those necessary ceremonials of her religion. Having finished her lustrations, she had just robed herself preparatory to her return, when a stranger suddenly appeared on horseback at the edge of the tank, and familiarly accosted her. Seeing that he was a Mohammedan, she turned herself to proceed in another direction, when he rudely arrested her progress. She was extremely agitated at finding herself alone in the

presence of a man, from the slightest contact with whom she had been taught to believe that personal defilement must accrue. She spoke not, but made another effort to retreat; the stranger immediately placed himself before her and prevented the accomplishment of her intention. This was embarrassing; her agitation increased every moment lest her husband should surprise her in a situation so equivocal, and in the presence too of one from whose very glance he would have maintained that pollution was conveyed. After making several attempts without success to quit the spot where she had been so unexpectedly intruded upon, she ventured to expostulate with the stranger for detaining her, and begged he would allow her to proceed.

"So you shall," he replied in a bland tone, which was accompanied with an equally bland smile, at the same time curling between his fingers a pair of strong black mustachios; "but it must be with me."

"Surely you don't intend to force compliance with a request which you know, independent of my will, the laws of that religion which I have been taught to venerate strictly forbid me to entertain?"

"Never think of your religion, which is the silliest delusion that ever enslaved the mind of a pretty woman. I'll soon convince you that a parcel of hideous dumb gods are not such reasonable objects of veneration as a young Mussulmaun, who can love no less ardently than a young Brahmin, whilst the latter affects greater affection for a divinity of clumsy stone than of beautiful flesh."

"It is impossible I should listen to your blasphe-

mies without horror. If you think to win my respect by railing against the objects of my worship, you had better give up the attempt without further effort, as you will by so doing only provoke my contempt."

"If I cannot win your love gently, I must try rougher means, bibi; for I have determined that you shall visit my home,—which I think you will not consider a disadvantageous exchange; for we followers of God's true Prophet know better how to enjoy life than your simpletons who bend the knee to painted blocks and carved wood."

Saying this, he sprang from his horse, and taking in his arms the astonished Brahminee, who was too much overcome by surprise to make resistance, he placed her upon the crupper of his steed, and vaulting before her into the saddle, galloped off without uttering another word.

Though stunned with the shock produced by so daring an act of abduction, the victim did not lose her consciousness, but maintained her seat upon the horse with that instinct of self-preservation which seldom deserts us even under the most disastrous circumstances.

After the lapse of a few hours the Brahmin's young and beautiful wife was securely lodged within the harem of a wealthy Mohammedan. What was now to be done? She had no means of communicating to her friends the circumstance of her unhappy situation, and for some time her days were passed in bitterness, and her nights in tears. To a youthful heart, however, sorrow is naturally repugnant, and it

began gradually to subside when she found there were no available means within her power of abating the evil which had overtaken her. The Mohammedan was kind, and she had no desire unfulfilled but that of liberty. By degrees the edge of her grief was blunted by the tenderness of the man who had so grievously wronged her. She found that repining produced no remission of her unhappiness, neither did it improve her beauty; she therefore gradually allowed those budding hopes, which swell in all young hearts, to open and put forth their delicate blossoms, and in a few weeks she was comparatively reconciled to the change of condition which had so unexpectedly befallen her.

The lovely Hindoo daily won upon the affections of her new lord, who treated her with so much flattering fondness that at length she found his presence no longer unwelcome, and eventually looked upon him—for he was a handsome lover—with a favourable eye. The idea of her husband would occasionally intrude into her thoughts and fill her bosom with momentary anguish; but the recollection that he would now view her as a polluted thing—as one with whom he could no longer hold communion, whose very breath would be supposed to convey contamination—stifled the pang, and caused her to reflect upon her present allotment with a more complacent spirit. She had forfeited the privileges of her caste by an act in which she was an unwilling agent; and the consciousness that if she was restored to her kindred, she must rank with Pariahs, who are the most abandoned of outcasts, determined her to relinquish the errors of

idolatry and embrace the religion professed by her gentle tyrant.

When this was made known to the youthful Mohammedan, he received the communication with joy, and the lovely Brahminee shortly after became one of the faithful. Her life henceforth passed in that changeless routine of pleasure peculiar to the harem, being a sort of splendid bondage, in which every luxury save the natural blessing of liberty was presented before her; but the negative happiness now within her grasp was always dashed with the bitterness of privation, and the hue of sadness therefore occasionally overspread her cheek. This being perceived by the Mohammedan, the moment he ascertained the cause, his new favourite was allowed to quit the harem, and to have a freedom of choice in her movements as to how and where she would spend her time: she was in fact released from all personal restraint, and this generous confidence attached her still more strongly to the man who was so tenderly indulgent to her wishes. At length she became a mother, and her maternal cares soon relieved the tedium of a life which had little in it to render its possession a boon; being a mere daily flux of unrelieved time, in which there was nothing save the absence of pain to enhance the possession of unvarying and monotonous pleasure.

The infant engrossed all her care. Her heart yearned towards it with a fondness especially felt by Hindoo mothers, who look upon their children, even under the sorest bereavements of poverty, as the greatest of mortal blessings. It seemed daily to become an object of more tender attachment, and

she felt that the cup of her enjoyment was now sparkling to the brim: but, alas! how small is the sum of human bliss! How rapidly is it expunged from the voluminous registry of time, and cast into the lap of oblivion as a worthless item, unfit to be received into that treasury out of which the joys of eternity are draughted!

The child of the adoring mother died just as it had commenced its second year. That mother was instantly bowed to the earth. She would receive no consolation, but mourned for it with all the intensity of distracted grief. The very lees of the cup of woe were swallowed, and her heart seemed steeped in wormwood. The remains of her departed babe were deposited in a grave over which was raised a small circular pile covered with chunam, with a tabular headstone of marble; upon this was engraved a passage from the Koran. For at least a month after the interment, according to the practice of Mohammedan mothers, she used to visit the tomb of her dead offspring, to pour upon it the tribute of her tears. Repairing to the sacred spot as the moon was riding up the blue vault of the spangled skies, where not a cloud stirred to dim its radiance, she laid a lighted taper* upon the white canopy, and breathed a silent prayer for the young spirit which had once animated that frame now mouldering beneath in all the repulsive deformity with which Death embraces the victims of his supremacy.

This nightly act of devotion was continued until

* See Vignette.

the severity of maternal grief had subsided into a quiet uncomplaining melancholy. So sudden a change from sprightliness to gloom was not at all welcome to the mercurial Mohammedan, who could not bear to associate himself with anything which bore the perpetual aspect of sadness. Seeing that his favourite continued a prey to despondency, he soon ceased to regard her with his usual tenderness, and she was in a short time supplanted by a new object of devotion. Having once abandoned her, coldness was succeeded by neglect, and he ended by turning her adrift on the wide world, without a home to shelter her, or a friend to whom she could repair for protection in her state of wretched and cruel bereavement.

CHAPTER XVI.

After the departure of his wife, the Brahmin was in a state of mind bordering upon distraction. Her absence was involved in mystery, which tortured him more than the wretchedness induced by her actual loss. He felt convinced, in spite of past endearment, that she had left him of her own free will; a suspicion never for an instant crossing his mind that she had been forcibly taken from the tank in which it was her custom to enjoy the morning bath. But why she should have quitted a home that appeared to yield her such complete satisfaction, he could not imagine. He had always treated her with tenderness; this she had often warmly avowed, and the best possible understanding and good-will appeared to exist between them. Inquiries were everywhere made to discover the supposed fugitive, but no welcome tidings reached the ears of the anxious husband. A conjuror was, as usual, consulted without effect: the discovery, in this instance at least, baffled his skill.

Week after week elapsed, still all search proved fruitless—every inquiry vain; and the indignant Brahmin pronounced a bitter malediction upon his wife for her supposed infidelity. She had dishonoured him and abjured her caste; he now therefore only sought to dis-

cover her that he might give her up as a victim to expiate the guilt of a dishonoured bed. Time, however, soothed his grief, though it did not restore peace to his bosom. He no longer repined at the weight of woe which had fallen so unexpectedly upon him, but resolved by a life of penance to atone for the guilt of past years, and spiritualise his body by fastings, mortifications, and torture. In this determination he was encouraged by his friends: they were elated at the idea of having a saint in their family who would wander about the world with a withered body and distorted limbs, an object of veneration to all devout Hindoos. He was therefore urged immediately to commence a pilgrimage to Benares, and having purified from the gross defilements of the flesh his youthful frame, now robust and sleek with the pampering enjoyments of a luxurious life, reduce it to that spiritual tenuity which should the better enable it, when disencumbered from its load of superfluous clay, to soar, like a straight and buoyant feather, to that Universal Presence, where it will be everlastingly absorbed in, and become a part of the infinite and ubiquitous Brihm.

This was a vast inducement to one of a naturally devout temperament, who had lost a young and beautiful wife, to quit the gay world and nobly give himself up as a spiritual martyr: he consequently prepared to set out on his pious pilgrimage. Having provided the necessary viaticum, together with a staff of light bamboo, and made his salaam to his friends, he turned his back towards the sea, and commenced his journey to the holy city, the walls of which are

washed by those consecrated waters supposed by all truly pious Hindoos to have their source above the highest regions of this lower world. After a long and tedious journey he reached this great emporium of manufactured divinities, where factitious gods may be had at all prices, and composed of all materials, from the basest clay to the purest gold. Upon his arrival, he placed himself at the doors of the pagodas; here he was relieved by the charitable; but, with the rigid conscience of a devotee, he ate nothing except a small quantity of rice, very sparingly moistened with ghee, and observed the strictest economy in dress, his entire wardrobe consisting of a single strip of coarse muslin, about twice as broad as the palm of his hand, which encircled his body.

No sooner was the light of day visible upon the tops of the distant mountains, than the Brahmin repaired to the consecrated ghaut, and purified his wasting body in the sacred river. This became his daily practice; after which he would place himself upon the broad steps, and, absorbed in silent meditation, apostrophise in thought the holy stream, detaching his mind from all worldly contemplations, and appearing so completely lapped in devout abstraction, that it would have puzzled a conjuror to determine whether he was under the influence of reason or of the moon. For days and weeks he restricted himself to the smallest quantity of food by which life could be sustained, and was consequently reduced to a shadow. In proportion as his flesh wasted, his reputation for sanctity rose; and the more he suffered, the more he was venerated. Hundreds thronged to behold him,

and to have the benefit of his shadow pass over them. He would sit by the hour on the bank of the Ganges smeared with cowdung, that most sacred of Hindoo cosmetics, receiving the homage of the deluded multitude, without even a turban to protect his head from the sun, which darted its quivering rays on the broad waters, whence they were reflected with increased intensity. He did not utter a word; and in the estimation of his infatuated worshippers this silence was the greatest possible proof of holiness.

By severe and unremitting penance the unhappy man only added to his mental distresses, and at length the energies of his mind were so completely subdued that his life was a burthen to him. There are several modes of self-destruction not only permitted by the Hindoo code, but registered as actions which the gods delight to distinguish with their approbation; and by one of these the wretched fanatic determined to take his departure forthwith from a world which he had of late tried by every possible means to render miserable. When he should have performed a sufficient number of daily penances to drain from his abased spirit the feculencies with which years of unchecked indulgence had charged it, he resolved to become a holy sacrifice, and ascend to the Swerga bearing the credentials of martyrdom.

In accordance with this holy determination, the penitentiary procured two large earthen jars measuring each about two gallons. Into the bottoms of these he caused to be drilled two holes of half an inch diameter, inserting a long wooden plug into both apertures. Having made the necessary preparations, shortly

after daylight had mantled the broad heavens, he repaired to the ghaut, upon the first step of which he paused for some time, his lips audibly muttering some mysterious mantras, intelligible only to the divinities to whom they were addressed, but who, in truth, were unable to hear them. His preparatory devotions being concluded, he descended to the edge of the water. By this time the ghaut was thronged with bathers; but not a creature attempted to frustrate his holy purpose. Though all knew his intention, none interposed to divert it.

Without taking the slightest notice of those by whom he was surrounded, the voluntary victim deliberately marched into the river, one of the jars being fastened to his back, and the other to his breast. He continued to mutter his prayers as he proceeded, his eyes fixed on vacancy, and his whole demeanour that of a man elevated by a consciousness of effectual expurgation into a silent but visible ecstasy. The persons who had by this time crowded to the scene beheld him with mute awe, some of them clapping their naked breasts with the palms of their hands in token of encouragement: but this was not needed, for the visionary advanced until the water reached the vessels; he was almost instantly borne off his legs and gradually wafted into the midst of the current. When satisfied that the stream was sufficiently deep for his purpose, he suddenly withdrew the plugs, to which cords had been previously attached, from the earthen jars: these immediately filling, bore him to the bottom. A few bubbles rose to the surface, and he would most certainly have

been "quietly inurned" in the maw of some alligator, had not a boat happened to pass at this critical juncture with a party of European soldiers, who had the humanity to fish him up with a boat-pole and take him on board their budgerow. Releasing his back and breast from the earthen jars, and having rolled him on the deck of the boat, by which his stomach ejected the water deposited there, they landed him at the ghaut, and left him to make a second experiment against his life should he think proper.

The Hindoos who had witnessed this unexpected rescue were clamorous against such an officious interference, and some of them were for again plunging the half-drowned man into the stream while he was yet weak and unable to struggle; but the devotee himself, upon being consulted, declined undergoing the sacrifice, which had been suspended for the moment, until a more fitting opportunity should be found for its consummation.

When the Brahmin seriously reflected upon the circumstances of his late rescue, it at once occurred to him that self-destruction in his particular case could not be acceptable to the gods whom he served, else they unquestionably would not have permitted a set of Christian soldiers, who did not honour them, to frustrate an act of personal immolation intended in an especial way to win their approbation. This opportune notion put an end to all further thoughts of suicide, and the saint determined to live on in spite of his misery. If he were really doomed to die in the Ganges between two pitchers, it was clear that he would not have been rescued from a watery death by the ene-

mies of his divinities, when he was in the very act of offering himself up a voluntary sacrifice.

Thus determined, the devotee at length persuaded himself that he had been sufficiently long at Benares for all spiritual purposes, and that he might consequently as well return to the south, where he could visit a certain spot in the small island of Ramiseram, long celebrated for Hindoo pilgrimages.

About this time it was rumoured in the city of Benares that a wealthy Mohammedan had lately arrived at Juanpoor from the Malabar coast, where he had taken the wife of a Brahmin from her home, caused her to abjure her creed, and converted her to his own. It at once struck the grief-worn penitentiary that his consort, upon whom he had cast such foul suspicions, might have been the victim of force, and not a voluntary agent in the act which deprived him of an object to which his heart was riveted. Without a moment's delay he set out for the abode of the supposed destroyer of his peace.

The town of Juanpoor is about twenty coss, or forty miles, from Benares, and stands upon the banks of the river Goomty. The fort is of vast strength, being built of solid masonry, and rises to a considerable height above the level of the surrounding plain, over which many magnificent ruins are scattered. "A suburb or clay-built hut leads to a large serai, formed of the same materials, through which there is a bridge of considerable extent, divided into two parts, one of which consists of ten arches, and is over the boundary of the river during the dry season. This bridge has stood two hundred and fifty years, having

been erected by Monahur Khan, the governor, during the reign of Akbar, and still remains a monument of his magnificence and of the superior skill of the architect. In the year 1773, a brigade of British troops under Sir Robert Barker, in their way from Oude, having embarked on the river Goomty, at Sultanpoor, in the height of the rainy season, sailed over this bridge, which was then submerged, yet it suffered no damage from the violence of the current. No native in modern times is capable of either planning or executing such a piece of architecture." *

The ruins in and near Juanpoor are extremely grand. The town being chiefly inhabited by Mohammedans, there are many splendid mosques in the neighbourhood, besides one in the town, called the Atoulah Kau Musjid, which is a truly magnificent structure. It has already been described in a former volume of this work.† The edifices throughout the whole district are unlike those met with in any other part of Hindostan. They have been generally constructed with the materials of ancient pagodas, which were frequently razed to the ground by the intolerant zeal of the Mohammedan conquerors, and upon their sites were erected temples for the performance of a new worship. This is especially observable in the city of Juanpoor and its vicinity, where the remnants of Hindoo sculpture are occasionally seen on portions of the material. This was perhaps the greatest indignity that could have been offered to a conquered people — especially to a people so wedded to their

* Description of Hindostan, vol. i. p. 315.

† See vol. ii. p. 179.

superstitious usages as the natives of India. Perhaps there is no part of the world where the sculpture is more exquisitely wrought, and at the same time scattered with such lavish profusion over the building without the least confusion or violation of good taste.

When the Brahmin reached Juanpoor, he found to his mortification that the Mohammedan had just quitted it; and he could gain no further information respecting him than that he had been for a few weeks on a visit to a wealthy relation, who, when questioned upon the subject of the abduction of the Hindoo's wife, did not appear to think it necessary that he should satisfy the anxious inquiries even of an injured husband, and refused to make any communication respecting his relative. The devotee turned from him with a bitter malediction and returned to Benares, whence, after a short sojourn, in order that he might fortify his spiritual temper after this additional shock of disappointment, by making his humble offerings in some of her more celebrated temples, he departed for the south, whither he arrived with a macerated frame but chastened spirit, after an absence of upwards of two years.

The miserable man reached the abode of his former happiness just at the setting in of the monsoon; he soon however abandoned it for a solitary hut in the jungle, where he shared it with the owl, the bat, and the toad. The rains set in with extreme violence; and though the almost roofless hovel in which he had sought shelter scarcely shielded him from the inclemency of an unusually tempestuous season, he nevertheless rigidly denied himself every comfort, and remained

there at the eminent risk of his life, feeling conscious, however, that he who had escaped drowning at the bottom of the Ganges, was not doomed to perish by rain and lightning. When the monsoon had passed away, he still continued his ascetic life, which he had made a vow to devote to the severest austerities of his religion.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE discarded Brahminee was now a miserable outcast, without home, kindred, or friend. She sought the neighbourhood in which the days of her youth had been passed; but all either shunned, met with curses, or pointed the finger of scorn at the degraded Hindoo. Having forfeited caste, even the pariahs looked upon her with contempt. Not one of her family would administer to her wants, and she was obliged to obtain a precarious subsistence by accepting the situation of ayah, or nurse, in a Portuguese family, in which she lived for several months; but the child committed to her charge dying, she was again cast upon the world without a home to shelter her, being once more reduced to the most pitiable destitution. No alternative remained but a return to that faith which she had abandoned under circumstances rather of necessity than from any sense of conviction; and although entertaining no hopes of being restored to her former social eminence, she nevertheless determined to atone for the indignity offered to the gods of her ancestors, by a life of sincere penitence and a rigid observance of the requisitions of those laws established by them, as she most fervently believed, for the benefit of their worshippers.

A Female Peasant of Ceylon

Finding there was no prospect of procuring the commonest necessaries of life in the neighbourhood where she had passed her childhood, this sad victim of Mohammedan treachery travelled by easy stages down the coast, and crossed from the continent to Ceylon, where, being unknown, she hoped to meet with more humanity than she had experienced among her own kindred. Her condition was sufficiently deplorable, and, though only in her nineteenth year, the extreme of human sorrow had already been her portion. The prejudices of caste in the island to which she had retired existing but to a very limited extent, she found no difficulty in obtaining employment among the peasants, who willingly procured her a regular engagement, and provided for her a humble but endurable home.

Though unused to labour, the despised Brahminee soon became reconciled to her change of lot, and performed the duties imposed upon her with a cheerful and ready alacrity, adopting the costume of the peasantry, and conforming to their rustic habits with resigned endurance. She might daily be seen, dressed in a flowing petticoat fastened loosely round the waist, the upper part of her person being entirely uncovered, trudging from the fields homeward with a long bamboo on her left shoulder, and a bundle of dried grass upon her head to feed the cattle of which she had charge. Her feet swelled with the severity of her toil, and the sun tanned her body to a deeper brown; nevertheless, this did not mar her beauty, and she became an object of general admiration among the strangers with whom she was now associated.

In this state of undisturbed content the still beautiful Hindoo passed several months. Her gains were indeed scanty, but sufficient for all the necessary purposes of sustaining life; and in her present state of abased feeling she required no more. Although cast among those with whom in the brighter days of her prosperity she would have shuddered to come in contact, she did not forget those religious obligations which before her unhappy abduction she had always discharged with scrupulous exactness; never allowing a morning to pass without performing her customary ablutions: in short, none of the numerous ceremonies of her religion were neglected, although so much of the day was occupied in the duties of her servitude. It was her determination now to atone for her negligence during the period of her enrolment among the upholders of another creed. Though frequently made an object of ridicule by the more licentious of the rude community who had admitted her among them when she was discarded from all other societies, she nevertheless did not allow herself to be diverted from her sacred purpose, but earnestly endeavoured by present assiduity to atone for past neglect.

The island of Ramiseram being considered a place of greater sanctity even than Benares, the Brahminee determined to visit its celebrated pagoda, there renew her vows of fealty to the divinities whom she had abandoned, and submit herself to the objurgations of the priests who presided at the shrine of that holy sanctuary. In former days it used to be the resort of pilgrims from all parts of Hindostan; and the present

splendour of the pagoda will testify that it was not a secluded temple raised to encourage the worship of a few peasants and casual travellers, but was erected to signalise the spot where the great Rama, an avatar or incarnation of Vishnoo, after his return from the conquest of the giant Ravan, set up his consecrated image, which was thenceforth to be worshipped. From that time pilgrims flocked to this holy spot, and it became sacred in proportion to the multitudes whom its reputed sanctity attracted to its altars.

"The guardianship of this sacred isle is in a family of devotees, the chief of which is named the Pandaram, and doomed to perpetual celibacy, the succession being carried on by the sisters or by the collateral branch. The greater part of the income is devoted to his use and to that of his relations, who have possessed the supreme power above ninety years." *

The discarded wife resolved to visit this spot; and signifying her determination to the companions of her daily toils, they wished her a prosperous journey, but laughed at her presumption. Not to be deterred by what she considered the profane gibes of untaught and therefore licentious minds, she set out on foot for this eminent sanctuary; and having obtained a passage from Manaar to Ramiseram in a fishing-boat, through the generosity of an honest fisherman, who was satisfied with her thanks for a fee, she threw herself under the shelter of a banyan, where she passed the night, and with the first peep of dawn presented herself at the door of the temple. Her feet tottered

* Description of Hindostan, vol. ii. page 476.

under her as she stepped through the lofty and magnificent portal, which seemed to frown upon her as if to forbid the entrance of profane feet. Her nerves, however, were wound up to too high a tension to be relaxed by the mere phantoms of a fervid though abjected mind. She laid her humble offering before the idol, a huge shapeless stone covered with filth and daubed with red paint, when her quick eye was suddenly attracted by a figure standing a few feet out of her path with his hand extended as if in the act of supplicating charity.

Though reduced to a mere skeleton, there was something in the contour of the stranger's frame which brought strongly to her mind certain agreeable recognitions. After a short but keen scrutiny, she recognised her husband in the thin emaciated form before her. His looks had hitherto been bent towards the ground; but at the sound of her voice, when she gently murmured his name, his eye suddenly kindled, his pale cheek flushed, and casting on her a glance of mingled joy and horror, he rushed from the pagoda. She followed him, her heart yearning with revived fondness, hoping that they might still be reunited in those bonds which had been so cruelly severed.

The wretched fugitive, soon overcome with the exertion of such an active flight, cast himself beside one of the tombs of departed saints, with which the island of Ramiseram abounds, where he lay panting and scarcely able to breathe. His wife approached him tremblingly.

"Profane not my presence," he cried, raising his

head: "thou art polluted, and canst never more cross my path without casting the taint of contamination upon this now spiritualised frame."

His tone, though stern, was not harsh, and his eye scanned the beautiful woman who stood before him, with an earnest gaze which at times melted into tenderness. The Brahminee, perceiving her power, approached the devotee in spite of his interdiction. He no longer shrank from her presence, but raised his hand to forbid her touching him.

"May I be heard," she asked imploringly, "in explanation of a wrong in which I was culpable from necessity, not from choice?"

He remained silent when the trembling penitent told him that she had quitted his home and her own under the most cruel compulsion.

"Come with me," he cried, interrupting her with a quivering lip and blanched cheek, "and let me hear at length the particulars of a story in which I am so sadly interested."

He now preceded her to the ferry which separated Ramiseram from the main land. This they crossed. She followed him to a small hut in the suburbs of a miserable village. Ordering her to seat herself on the ground before the door, he listened with intense earnestness to the history of his own wrongs, which were summed up in hers. As she proceeded, his conscience was disturbed by the foul suspicions he had cast upon her. It was evident that she had been rather a victim than a criminal, and he felt already anxious to restore her to his confidence and to his love. The desire of domestic happiness began

to revive within his torpid bosom, already glowing with kindled sympathy. Tears gathered in his eyes, unmoistened for many a sad month; and when the unhappy criminal saw that her narrative had subdued him to visible emotion, she threw herself at his feet and wept with moving anguish.

"Woman," said the Brahmin after a pause, "you are fully acquainted with the laws which regulate our order: I therefore need not tell you that the loss of caste renders you no longer fit to hold communion with those in whose society you once shared. All intercourse betwixt us must be for ever cut off in this world and in the next: you have forfeited that paradise which you were once privileged* to claim as your especial inheritance."

This was spoken without sternness, yet in a tone of despondency which seemed to imply his regret at being for ever separated from one whom he had once loved with so ardent an affection that the withdrawing of it had almost riven his heart.

"But," said the still prostrate wife imploringly, "is it not possible for me to regain caste by paying certain penalties? Whatever these may be, I am willing to undergo them if that will restore me to your affection. I had better cease to live than hold life upon conditions which render every moment an interval of mental torture."

"The price that will be demanded for a restoration to your forfeited honours, if you appeal to that tribunal which adjudges the penalties in similar

* Brahmins suppose that the mere circumstance of their being Brahmins will secure to them eternal bliss.

cases, will be such as cannot be paid without the forfeiture of life."

"I nevertheless am content to pay it; for it is far better to die a martyr than live a degraded and suffering criminal."

"Think well before you decide. Death is a sad consummation to one who has no hopes beyond the grave; and you are cut off from all hope by the horrible pollution which has fallen upon you. Your abjuration of the faith transmitted to you from your forefathers, and which had rendered you a favoured object of heavenly communion, was voluntary on your part. You have bowed the knee to false gods, and therefore, I fear, can never be forgiven. Your peril is extreme."

The Brahmin had considerable influence with his tribe, and resolved to ascertain whether by an application to those heads of it who decided upon all spiritual defalcations, he could not obtain a remission of his wife's sentence of excommunication. This influence had been occasionally tried; but the intensity of those sufferings adjudged to be undergone as the price of rescinding a judgment, always passed with extreme severity, was in every case such as left no hopes that the penitentiary would survive it: his fears therefore prevailed over his hopes when he appealed to that tribunal for a reversal of the decree which had doomed a once happy pair to the saddest condition of misery. His application, however, was favourably heard, and a consultation immediately took place upon the expediency of restoring the degraded wife to her original rank among her tribe.

They quickly came to the following determination:—that as the criminal had been forced from her home by violence, and had been, under circumstances, virtually compelled to renounce the worship of those gods who are alone able to confer everlasting rewards after the final change, they would visit her with the least possible punishment in similar cases awarded. They consequently decreed, that if she really aspired to regain her caste, she must submit to be plunged for the space of fifty-nine seconds—and this near limitation of time was considered a merciful decision—into a vessel of boiling oil.

When this judgment, from which there was no appeal, was communicated to the husband, who had permitted his hopes to gather strength from the favourable manner in which his petition had been received, he was struck dumb with terror. It was evident that no mortal could survive such an ordeal, and he immediately made up his mind to behold his wife perish under the dreadful judicial probation to which she had been sentenced; for, having appealed to the ecclesiastical authorities, there was no evading the trial adjudged by that stern court of inquisition. He communicated its awful decision to the condemned, who heard it without perturbation, and at once prepared to undergo the terrible infliction.

"I am in truth happy," she said, while a tear suffused her soft bright eye, "at the thought that I shall at last have the opportunity of expiating by my death the enormity of a long degraded life. The sacrifice will, I trust, restore me in the next world to the privileges which I have so justly forfeited in this."

The spirit of him whom she had so grievously wronged, though somewhat calmed by her fortitude, was dreadfully disturbed at the idea of witnessing the forfeiture of a life far dearer than his own, and in a manner so utterly out of the course of nature; but there was now no evading the penalty,—it had been challenged and must be paid. The victim continued unperturbed; her eye beamed with a holy and concentrated resolution — a solemn energy of purpose, which showed that her confidence greatly overbalanced her fears.

The following day was fixed upon for this stern trial of a woman's fortitude. Meanwhile, the unhappy husband could not forbear seeking an interview with the doomed Brahminee, though by the laws of his order he was bound not to admit her approach within a certain distance of his body; in this instance, however, the strength of revived affection prevailed over the arbitrary restrictions imposed by human authority, though recognised by all genuine Hindoos, and he determined that their last meeting in this world should be at least one of reciprocal forgiveness.

The home of the solitary was not likely to be intruded upon, from his known ascetic habits; he therefore proposed that the condemned should pass some hours with him ere they should be separated for ever. To this proposal the latter would not assent, lest she should involve him in the disgrace of a forfeiture like her own, and thus reduce him to the necessity of reaping those bitter fruits which invariably spring from the seeds of guilt. "It was sufficiently

grievous," she said, "to behold the misery to which he was already reduced by her — to see in him the freshness of youth and health prematurely blighted— to see it succeeded by the shrunken aspect of age and the morbid hue of disease—to behold a man green in years withered before his prime, and tottering with apparent decrepitude."

She turned from the benevolent and forgiving saint with a heavy sigh, having previously bent before him to the earth, which she touched with her forehead in token of the deepest humiliation. He did not arrest her departure, but assured her that he should be present to witness her fortitude on the morrow. When left alone to his reflections, which had for more than two years been characterised by the greatest austerity, his mind reverted with a severe pang to the days when the bright sunbeam danced in his path, and the warm pulses of joy elated his heart. The late meeting with her who had once been the magnetic pivot upon which all his happiness turned, had thawed his frozen sympathies, opened the long-closed sluices of emotion, and overflowed his bosom with such a flood of tender reminiscences, that the austerity of the devotee was merged in the feelings of the husband, and the longings of former enjoyment began to take possession of his soul. The idea of having that revived hope which had just begun to kindle within him, to invest him as it were with new life, and furnish him with perceptions of happiness undiscovered until now, strangled at the instant of its birth, was a reflection to the last degree agonising. He threw himself upon the bare earth and wept.

The criminal condemned to the dreadful punishment already stated, was more composed; but hers was the composure of sustained and holy fortitude, not of indifference, for all the tenderest impulses of former and almost forgotten affections had been rekindled in her bosom to a most painful excess: still she repelled their distressing ebullitions, lest they should distract her thoughts from the solemn trial which awaited her so nearly.

The day of probation dawned; and the victim was summoned to discharge a penalty imposed by the tyranny of superstition. She was preceded by two men, appointed to place her into the vessel of boiling oil, each being furnished with a thick leathern strap, the instrument by which she was to be laid in the dreadful receptacle. She moved forward in silence, her hands crossing her bosom, and her brow raised with an expression of solemn reliance towards heaven.

The place selected for this fearful ceremony was near the edge of a deep tank, around which was assembled an immense concourse of spectators. Above a large fire, resting upon four high flat stones, was a long iron vessel, something in the shape of a coffin, nearly filled with cocoa-nut oil; this was boiling gently over the glowing flame, excited by a quantity of grease being thrown upon it to more rapid combustion. The husband of her who was about to undergo the appalling ordeal stood near the fire with a countenance in which the deep struggles of emotion were too evident. His eyes, sunk in their bony sockets, were bloodshot and glassy, as if the sight had been dimmed by the sad ravages of years. He did not

utter a word; but the feelings which convulsed his bosom were to be read in every line of his haggard and care-worn features. His fingers quivered as he occasionally lifted them to his brow to remove the moisture which had gathered there, and his whole body seemed to vibrate under the load of mental agony at that moment pressing upon his spirit with the weight of a mountain.

Meanwhile, the object of his anxiety had reached the spot where she was to expiate the crime of having forfeited the social and spiritual dignity of her tribe. She looked upon the bubbling fluid into which she was sentenced to be plunged without manifesting the slightest repugnance at attempting the test. Her eye did not blench, her lip did not quiver, neither did her step falter as she ascended to a platform raised about three feet from the ground in order to bring her upon a level with the vessel into which she was to be immersed. So soon as she had reached the platform, she looked solemnly round upon the assembled multitude; but observing her husband stagger as he saw her place her feet upon the plank, a slight convulsive twitching passed over her cheek for a moment, and she remained unshaken amid the horrible array of death immediately before her. Having put up a silent prayer to Him in whom she trusted to be finally absorbed, a bandage was placed over her eyes, and she was bid to raise her arm as a signal when she should have completed her invocation. The moment the bandage was fastened round her head, entirely obstructing sight, a wooden vessel, which had been previously sunk in the tank, was placed beside

her filled with water; into this, when the signal was given, she was suddenly plunged. Though she scarcely remained a dozen seconds in the wooden trough, she was perfectly insensible when withdrawn from the water. In fact, the dreadful shock of conviction alone that she was cast into boiling oil had produced an entire suspension of her faculties; so that if the attendant functionaries had really immersed her in the heated fluid, her death would not have been at all severe.

So long a time elapsed before animation returned, that fears were entertained she would not recover. At length, however, to the joy of the anxious husband, who manifested it by hysteric sobs, she began to show signs of life, and was finally restored at once to consciousness and to the privileges she had so innocently forfeited.

Upon her perfect recovery, the president of the council which had condemned her to the penalty of being immersed in boiling oil, addressing her, said, "Your fortitude and sincere repentance have restored you to your husband and to society. Had you demurred at the dreadful penalty which had been adjudged to you, not only the forfeiture of life would have followed, but that also of your everlasting enjoyment in the eternal abodes. Your pious determination to submit to the doom passed upon you has obtained for you redemption from past condemnation, and you are now received among us with all your forfeited privileges renewed. May you be as happy as you and your husband deserve to be!"

She threw herself into the arms of her husband,

and moistened his cheek with her tears; after which he bore her in triumph to their former home. The return to domestic happiness soon restored him to health. His frame resumed its roundness and its vigour, his eye its brightness, his gait its elasticity, and his voice its strength. The joyful pair dwelt happily together, were blessed with a numerous progeny, and the story of the Brahminee wife was for a long time current on the coast of Malabar.

When persons in India lose caste, nothing can exceed the degradation; but when restored to their former position, they are considered to have undergone an expurgation so perfect that no moral defilement remains. This will at once account for the readiness with which the Brahminee in the narrative just given was received by her husband after she had recovered her lapsed honours. All his prejudices against her were merged in her moral renovation, and she became as pure in his eyes as if she had never fallen. Such an event could scarcely happen in the present state of European society; but in India there would be nothing shocking in this to the mind of the most fastidious Hindoo. Their repugnances against moral deviations are less vivid than ours; which will at once reconcile to European readers the seeming improbability of this Oriental narrative.

Fortress of Chunar on the Ganges

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHUNAR GHUR, the place represented in the accompanying engraving, presents one of the most striking scenes on the Ganges. Its projecting wall and towers, which seem to contest the passage of the mighty stream, and rise out of it to a commanding height above the surrounding plain, are features which strongly arrest the traveller's eye in passing up or down this venerated river. The architecture, though quite in the Hindoo style, is much unlike that generally found in the neighbourhood; it is massy and imposing, conveying an idea of prodigious strength, with which elegance was no doubt originally very strikingly combined. The place is of great antiquity; though it may be presumed that it was, to a certain extent, added to under the Afghan and Moghul domination.

The town of Chunar, considerably below the fort and elevated but little above the plain, is situated on the south side of the Ganges, which washes its walls, and is about seventeen miles south-west of Benares. In ancient times it was a place of much importance, and had a large district attached to it; but of late years, from various causes, and particularly from the unhealthiness of its situation, which is at certain seasons extremely fatal to the inhabitants, it has been

comparatively deserted. It has ceased to be the capital of a district as formerly, its lands being attached to the adjacent provinces of Mizapoor and Benares. The fortifications have been suffered to decay, and from neglect the place is rapidly subsiding into a state of venerable ruin. The inhabitants are generally poor, and commonly bear that sickly hue of disease which betokens exposure to unwholesome malaria, and to an enervating climate.

The fortress of Chunar, or what remains of it, for it is now in a state of miserable dilapidation, is situated upon a lofty freestone rock, several hundred feet high, rising abruptly from the dead flat beneath, and commanding an extensive view of the Gangetic plain. It forms a complete promontory, stretching to a considerable distance into the river, which, when its channel is full during the monsoons, rushes round this intruding headland with fearful impetuosity. Chunar Ghur was formerly celebrated for the strength of its fortifications; walls protected by strong towers rising one behind another, and covering the citadel with an impregnable array of ramparts, which were manned by a numerous garrison. Even now the batteries are sufficiently formidable, completely commanding the navigation of the river; and no boat is allowed to pass up or down without examination from an officer stationed there for that purpose.

The modern town is composed of low native huts and European bungalos, placed without order and exhibiting the most unpicturesque confusion. In consequence of the unhealthiness of the place, few persons of any consequence reside there, and nothing has

been done by the British government to improve the comfort of English residents.

"In 1530, Chunar was the residence of Shere Khan the Afghan, who expelled the Emperor Humayoon from Hindostan. In 1545, it was taken by the Moghuls after a siege of six months. In 1563, this fortress, after repulsing a night attack of the British troops, was, some time afterwards, delivered up without a siege, and has ever since remained in the Company's possession; but since the British frontier has been carried so much further to the north and west, it has been superseded as a military depot by Allahabad." *

Of this part of the country Bishop Heber says,† "Suttees are more abundant here than even in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, but chiefly confined to the lower ranks. The last yearly return amounted to above forty; and there were several of which no account was given to the magistrate. It has been indeed a singular omission on the part of government, that though an ordinance has been passed commanding all persons celebrating a suttee to send in notice of their intention to the nearest police-officer, no punishment has been prescribed for neglect of this order; nor has it ever been embodied in the standing regulations, so as to make it law or authorise a magistrate to commit to prison for contempt of it. If government mean their order respecting the publicity of suttees to be obeyed, they must give it the proper efficacy; while if suttees are not under the inspection of

* Hamilton's Hindostan, vol. i. page 313.

† See Journal, vol. i. pp. 351, 2, 3, 4.

the police, the most horrible murders may be committed under their name. This struck me forcibly from two facts which were incidentally told me. It is not necessary, it seems, for the widow who offers herself, to burn actually with the body of her husband. His garments, his slippers, his walking-staff,—anything which has at any time been in his possession will do as well. Brahmin widows, indeed, are by the Shaster not allowed this privilege, but must burn with the body, or not at all. This, however, is unknown or disregarded in the district of Ghazipoor and most other regions of India. But the person of whom I was told was no Brahmin: he was a labourer, who had left his family in a time of scarcity, and gone to live, as was believed, in the neighbourhood of Moorshadabad, whence he had once in the course of several years sent his wife a small sum of money from his savings, by a friend who was going up the country. Such remittances, to the honour of the labouring class in India, are usual, and, equally to their honour, when entrusted to any one to convey, are seldom embezzled. Some years after, however, when the son of the absentee was grown up, he returned one day from a fair at a little distance, saying he had heard bad news, and that a man unknown had told him his father was dead. On this authority the widow determined to burn herself; and it was judged sufficient that an old garment of the supposed dead man should be burned with her. Now, it is very plain how easily, if the son wanted to get rid of his mother, he might have brought home such a story to induce her to burn; and it is also very plain, that

whether she was willing or not, he might carry her to the stake, and, if the police are to take no cognizance of the matter, might burn her under pretence of a suttee. How little the interference of neighbours is to be apprehended in such cases, and how little a female death is cared for, may appear by another circumstance which occurred a short time ago at a small distance from the city of Ghazipoor, when, in consequence of a dispute which had taken place between two freeholders about some land, one of the contending parties, an old man of seventy and upwards, brought his wife, of the same age, to the field in question, forced her, with the assistance of her children and other relatives, into a little straw hut built for the purpose, and burned her and the hut together, in order that her death might bring a curse upon the soil, and her spirit haunt it after death, so that his successful antagonist should never derive any benefit from it. On some horror and surprise being expressed by the gentleman who told me this case, one of the officers of his court, the same indeed who had reported it to him, not as a horrible occurrence, but as a proof how spiteful the parties had been against each other, said very coolly, 'Why not? She was a very old woman, — what use was she?' The old murderer was in prison; but my friend said he had no doubt that his interference in such a case between man and wife was regarded as singularly vexatious and oppressive; and he added, 'The truth is, so little value do these people set on their own lives, that we cannot wonder at their caring little for the life of another. The cases of

suicide which come before me double those of suttees: men, and still more women, throw themselves down wells or drink poison for apparently the slightest reasons, generally in consequence of some quarrel, and in order that their blood may lie at their enemy's door; and unless the criminal in question had had an old woman at hand and in his power, he was likely enough to have burned himself.'

"Human sacrifices, as of children, are never heard of now in these provinces, but it still sometimes happens that a leper is burnt or buried alive; and as these murders are somewhat blended also with religious feeling, a leper being supposed to be accursed of the gods, the Sudder Dewannee, acting on the same principles, discourages, as I am told, all interference with the practice. The best way, indeed, to abolish it would be to establish lazar-houses, where these poor wretches should be maintained, and if possible cured, or at all events kept separate from the rest of the people,—a policy by which, more than anything else, this hideous disease has been extirpated in Europe."

All the tribes of Bengalese along the banks of the Ganges, from Calcutta to Hurdwar, are notoriously licentious in their habits, and very impatient of moral restraint: vice consequently prevails among them to a deplorable extent. Robbers used to infest the whole country; and although the confederacies of organised gangs have been in a great measure suppressed by the energy of British legislation, dacoit robberies are still but too prevalent; and perhaps in no part of Hindostan are the courts of justice so constantly

crowded with criminals. The death of a fellow-creature is commonly regarded as a very venial offence, and frequently visited by the native authorities with the slightest possible punishment.

I remember a circumstance occurring in the neighbourhood of Chunar Ghur, which will sufficiently show the little regard entertained for the life of one of his own race by an irritated Hindoo. A quarrel had taken place between a sepoy and a mahoot belonging to one of the Company's elephants, during which the contending party had come to blows, when the sepoy soon made his antagonist cry out for quarter. The thrashing which he had received rankled in the mahoot's breast for some time; and though he did not dare give it vent in expressions, his fierce looks, whenever he met the man who had disgraced him, sufficiently attested the bitter state of his feelings. One day, being with his elephant near the jungle, where he had been exercising it, after washing and scraping it in a neighbouring tank, he observed his foe advancing towards the spot. He immediately thought this would be a favourable opportunity to retaliate the injury he had received; for under the protection of his elephant he knew that he was secure from assault by the person who had so severely chastised him.

As the sepoy approached, the mahoot began to abuse him in the most opprobrious terms; which so incensed the soldier, that, drawing his bayonet, he rushed towards his insulter, who immediately ran to the elephant to shield him from the threatened mischief. The sagacious animal instantly stooped its head, at the same time bending its fore leg in such a manner

that the mahoot was enabled to spring upon its neck, which he reached before the sepoy could execute his fatal intentions. Giving the elephant a sign, the colossal beast struck down the panting soldier with its trunk, then placing its fore foot upon his body, crushed him to death in an instant.

The mahoot was tried for murder; and though several witnesses proved the fact of the sepoy's destruction by the elephant, the proof of intention on the part of the mahoot not being sufficiently substantiated, the man was acquitted, though little doubt could be entertained of his guilt.

CHAPTER XIX.

One of the most remarkable things in the scenes presented to the traveller's eye in his voyage up the Ganges from Calcutta to the mountains in which that magnificent river has its source, is the striking alternation of Hindoo and Mohammedan features visible in the different towns and fortresses which arrest attention during the passage. The stately massiveness and harmonious proportions of the Hindoo structures are agreeably contrasted with the lighter, more elegant, and far more elaborate details of art so conspicuous in the edifices raised by the Mohammedan conquerors; a finer specimen of which perhaps, upon the whole, does not exist than the mausoleum of Nizam-ud-Deen Oulea, a saint who lived in great repute during the reign of Akbar, and erected the splendid mosque which appears immediately behind the tomb.

These structures now exist among the ruins of old Delhi, but are kept in perfect repair by the zeal of pious Mussulmauns, who visit the shrine of the saint as a sort of inferior Mecca, where their sins are remitted and their names registered for admission among the houries in Paradise. The tomb of Nizam-ud-Deen Oulea and the mosque near it are considered among the very best specimens of Mohammedan architecture. The tomb is entirely composed of white

marble, but, though elaborately ornamented, there is nothing tawdry about it; on the contrary, it forms a grateful contrast with the more stately edifice behind it; the latter being built of á reddish stone, throws out the former into bold and striking relief, the beauty of each being much enhanced by their appropriate juxta-position. The form of both buildings, though they are highly decorated, is extremely simple; and this simplicity of construction displays the elaborate detail of ornament to the best possible advantage.

The mosque is a beautiful design, constructed with admirable taste and judgment, courting attention everywhere to the beauty of its forms in detail, and to the effect of their combination, which is in the happiest style of appropriate art. It is probable that funds were left by the founder to keep it in repair, as while the edifices by which it is surrounded are in a state of lamentable decay, this temple still exists in perfect preservation. The whole of the exterior being constructed of a dark red porphyry, gives it an aspect of magnificence apart from the judicious embellishments with which the taste of the architect has enriched it. Round the domes and on the parapet are turrets sculptured with great mechanical skill; and the windows and gateway are perhaps equal to anything of the kind in this or any other country. In front of the mausoleum are several small tombs still in good preservation; and this spot is the daily resort of numerous righteous Mohammedans, who entertain a highly religious veneration for the burial-places of their reputed saints. The engraving gives an extremely accurate

The Mausoleum of Nizamuddeen Outub Delhi

representation of these celebrated structures. The life of every Mohammedan saint is so mixed up with extravagant fable, that it is difficult to come at the true character of these worthies, of whom Nizam-ud-Deen Oulea was one of sufficient repute to render him still an object of veneration among pious Mussulmauns. As a specimen of the monstrous fables by which the Mohammedan historians attempt to elevate the characters of their Imams and other holy men, I need only quote the following from Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia.* "The principal fables of the Soofees relate to those of their sect who have suffered martyrdom. Of these one of the most celebrated is Shems Tubreezee, who was sentenced to be flayed alive on account of his having raised a dead person to life. We are told that, after the law had been put in force, he wandered about carrying his own skin, and solicited some food to appease his hunger; but he had been excommunicated as well as flayed, and no one would give him the slightest help. After four days he found a dead ox, but could not obtain fire to dress it. Wearied out with the unkindness of men, he desired the sun to broil his meat. It descended to perform the office, and the world was on the point of being consumed, when the holy sheikh commanded the flaming orb to resume its station in the heavens."

"The Soofees," says Sir John Malcolm,† "are stated by one of their most violent and able enemies to deny the doctrine of reward and punishment; which

* Vol. ii. p. 282.

† History of Persia, vol. ii. pp. 283, 4.

is as incompatible with their ideas of the re-absorption of the soul into the divine essence, as with their literal belief of predestination. But they do not admit the truth of this assertion, and some of their most celebrated teachers, who have revolted at a literal interpretation of the Koran, have maintained that sinners will be punished, and that the good will enjoy a higher and purer bliss than can be found in a sensual paradise. While others, more visionary, believe that the imagination will have as great a power in the other world as in this, and that the punishment of hell will consist in a delusion. Men, they say, will see a fire which they will conceive is to burn them, but which when it reaches them will prove cold. One writer of this sect goes so far as to assert that those who are condemned to hell, will soon, from the habit of living there, not only be reconciled to its heat, but deem it a blessing, and look with disgust on the joys of Paradise."

Such are the shallow fallacies by which men of heated imaginations attempt to delude mankind, and by which they really do impose upon the feeble minds of those who grasp at any shadow projected from the cloudy hemisphere of what they miscall religion, to prop their hopes of impunity for sin. What is there, however monstrous, that human credulity will not accept for truth when given under the sanction of some pretender to infallibility? Throughout the East gorgeous monuments have been raised to perpetuate the impositions of such pretenders, whose bold vaticinations and monstrous heresies have obtained for them canonization among sectaries of the same persuasion.

An admirable account is given of the Mohammedan sects in Sale's Preliminary Discourse to his translation of the Koran, in which he furnishes all the remarkable particulars of their tenets, these being often based upon metaphysical subtleties, that invest them with just sufficient light to render their darkness visible. "Their scholastic divinity," * says Sale, "is a mongrel science, consisting of logical, metaphysical, theological, and philosophical disquisitions, and built on principles and methods of reasoning very different from what are used by those who pass among the Mohammedans themselves for the sounder divines or more able philosophers."

In Hindostan it is certain that many of the Mohammedan devotees have mixed up the monstrous abominations of Brahminical theology with the scarcely more consistent doctrines of their own divines; and nothing can well exceed the fanaticism which they display when they have reached, as they imagine, the climax of spirituality. Bigotry tends everywhere to produce the same results; and he who witnesses the Mohammedan fakeer practising such austerities as would excite the envy of the sternest Trappist, whose life of severe mortification is comparatively a prolonged enjoyment, cannot help feeling a momentary humiliation at the pitiful weakness of humanity.

The Mohammedans of India are not generally very rigid in the performance of their religious, much less of their moral duties; but in proportion as the mass is lax, the few who really devote their lives to vagrant devotion or solitary asceticism are strict to the letter

* Preliminary Discourse, page 207.

in acting up to the minutest requisitions of their formularies. There are, nevertheless, many impostors among them who enjoy at once the reputation of saints, and the luxury of sybarites. They assume the garb of religion, but revel in every licentious indulgence with the badge of sainthood upon them; and yet it is quite amazing to see the influence which such men obtain over a mass of deluded disciples, who, while they behold their dissipation, openly practised and avowed, still look up to them as an order of beings whom the Deity delights to honour. But perhaps, after all, if we look at home, we see much the same sort of thing in the profligate demagogue, who becomes the idol of a class whose thoughts and feelings he moulds to his own abandoned purposes; in the fanatical sectarian, who assumes for himself and for his satellites the exclusive privilege of sinning with impunity; and in the political empiric, whose fatuitous predictions are looked upon by a host of admiring proselytes as the oracles of legislative wisdom.

CHAPTER XX.

THE most striking object of art exhibited to the traveller after he quits Hurdwar, that celebrated place of Hindoo pilgrimage described in the first volume of this work,* is a rope bridge, which crosses the river Alacananda a short distance below Serinagur. This town extends along the right bank of the river, which enters the valley close by a village named Seerkote. When the channel is filled during the rains, the stream is so rapid that no boats of any kind can cross it, and, a short distance below the bridge, is nearly a quarter of a mile wide. No idea can be formed of the extent of Serinagur from the engraving, as part of the town is concealed by the high rock which appears on the right of the picture. It is a place of some extent for a hill town. "It occupies nearly the centre of the valley, and is in length about three quarters of a mile, but much less in breadth, its form being elliptical. The houses are of stones roughly and irregularly put together with common earth, generally raised to a second floor, and all covered with slate. They are so crowded together as to leave little more space for the street than is sufficient for two persons to pass. The house of the former Rajahs is in the middle of the town, and is

* See page 203.

the largest, being raised to a fourth story and built of coarse granite. The ground-floors of the houses are used as shops, and the upper stories for the accommodation of the family. The encroachments of the Alacananda, the earthquake of 1803, and the Goorka invasion, all combined to hasten the decay of this town, which when taken possession of by the British in 1815 was in a very ruinous condition. The inhabitants consist chiefly of descendants of emigrants from the low countries, and the leading persons are the agents of the banking-houses at Nujibabad and the Dooab, who are employed in the sale and exchange of merchandise and coins. Formerly these persons resided here only eight months in the year, quitting the hills and returning to their homes at the commencement of the rainy season. The traffic in silver and specie forms one of the most profitable branches of commerce, and is carried on to a considerable amount." *

At the western extremity of the valley the current of the river Alacananda strikes against the rocky base of the mountain with great violence, is cast back, and forms a curve just below the town of Serinagur. The usual width of the channel where the rope bridge is erected, except when flooded by the rains, is about eighty yards. At all times the current is here too rapid and agitated for the passage of boats. The channel is greatly interrupted by huge masses of rock that constantly roll from the mountains, between which, during the monsoons, the waters foam and hiss with frightful impetuosity. At these periods the

* Hamilton, vol. ii. p. 639.

bridge is removed altogether, and again erected when the waters subside. From the ingenuity of its structure, its removal and erection are alike matters of easy accomplishment; and yet, considering the lightness and apparent fragility of this singular bridge, its strength and durability are astonishing. The river is crossed by no less than three of these bridges between Serinagur and Hurdwar, — at the former place, at Gangoutri, and at Deo Prague.

The bridge represented in the engraving is just two hundred and forty feet in length, and about eight broad. It is an extremely ingenious contrivance, but at the same time so simple that it may be erected and removed in the course of a few hours. It is built entirely of coir rope,—that is, the rope made from the filaments composing the husk which covers the cocoanut,—except the four upright poles supporting the structure at either end, the transverse bars which unite them respectively, and the slips of thin bamboo laid close together on the rope frame-work so as to form a practicable footing for passengers crossing the bridge, which is constructed as follows:

Two lofty and very strong bamboos are firmly fixed in the ground on each side of the river, and connected by means of a cross pole, forming a compact frame. Over the top of this frame, at the angles, stout cords are carried across the stream, twisted into two single ropes on either side, and describing an inverted arch. Passing over the angles of the bamboo frames, the cords are separated and fastened separately into the ground, sloping from the perpendicular frame and thus counteracting the pressure of pas-

sengers upon the bridge. From the bottom of the upright bamboos are carried other thick ropes, drawn towards those above by a lacing of cords, which serves as a rail to protect passengers while crossing. Flat pieces of bamboo traversing the lower ropes at very short distances, form a sufficiently secure footing, although, to persons not accustomed to pass this fragile-looking structure, the security is not so perfect as to hush those alarms which the chafing of the waters beneath seldom fails to produce.

On the top of the rock, near the river, in the foreground, are the remains of a considerable building, probably used originally as a fortress, but subsequently inhabited by a Hindoo devotee.

It is a curious fact, that these rude specimens of Hindoo art are the prototypes of suspension bridges in this country, which are constructed radically upon the same principle, aided of course by the improved suggestions of modern science: but when it is known that those structures have existed in northern India for many centuries, we naturally become interested in works which have originated in our own country such a vast improvement in a most important branch of architecture. It is clear that the principles of mathematical science were well understood by the inhabitants of this mountainous region, who at no era of their history have exhibited so high a degree of civilisation as their more southern countrymen of the plains, even at a period when the people of England were little better than barbarians, the slaves of Druidical tyranny and superstition, and utterly unable to comprehend the perplexities of any mechanical con-

trivance beyond the simplest implements of husbandry, or the common weapons of warfare.

Several of these rope bridges have been erected of late years by a Mr. C. Shakspear, as will appear from Bishop Heber's Journal.

"In passing Cossipoor,"* says the bishop, "on my return to Tittyghur, I called on Mr. C. Shakspear, and looked at his rope bridges, which are likely to be most useful, in this country at least, if not in Europe.† Their principle differs from that of chain bridges, in the centre being a little elevated, and in their needing no abutments. It is, in fact, an application of a ship's standing rigging to a new purpose; and it is not even necessary that there should be any foundation at all, as the whole may be made to rest on flat timbers, and, with the complete apparatus of cordage, iron, and bamboos, may be taken to pieces and set up again in a few hours, and removed from place to place by the aid of a few camels and elephants. One of these over a torrent near Benares, of a hundred and sixty feet span, stood a severe test during last year's inundation, when, if ever, the cordage might have been expected to suffer from the rain, and when a vast crowd of neighbouring villagers took refuge on it as the only safe place in the neighbourhood, and indeed almost the only object which continued to hold itself above the water. He has now finished another bridge

* Vol. i. page 83.

† Bishop Heber appears to have imagined that Mr. Shakspear was the inventor of these bridges; but this is quite a mistake: he only applied, and improved upon, a principle long known in northern India.

for the Caramnasa,* at the expense of Ramchunder Narain, whom I met at the Durbar, and who may expect to reap much popularity with his countrymen from such a public benefit, not only as facilitating intercourse, but as freeing their religious pilgrims from a great anxiety. The name of the river in question means 'the destroyer of good works,' from the circumstance of an ancient devotee, whose penances, like those of Kehama, had exalted him to Indra's heaven, having been precipitated headlong by Siva, till his sacrifices broke his fall half-way, directly over the stream in question. He now hangs in the air, head downwards, and his saliva flows into and pollutes the whole water in such a manner that any person who bathes in, or even touches it, loses the merit of all his antecedent penances, alms, and other acts of piety,—reserving, however, the full benefit of his misdeeds, of whatever description. All Brahmins who are obliged to pass it—and it lies in the way to some of the most illustrious places of pilgrimage — are in the greatest terror. They are sometimes carried on men's shoulders, sometimes ferried over; but in either case if they are in the least splashed or wetted, it amounts almost to a matter of damnation, without hope or chance of pardon. The people on the bank, who act as watermen, are not influenced by these superstitions; but to Indians in general Mr. Shakspear's bridge will be most valuable. The span of this bridge, which is strong enough to bear a field-piece, is three hundred and twenty feet

* A small serpentine river in the province of Bahar, which separates it from that of Benares.

in length, its breadth eight; its flooring composed of stout bamboos, connected by coir rope, with a network hand-rail on either side, also of coir, as are the shrouds and principal tackling which support the whole. The appearance of the bridge is light and graceful, and its motion on passing over it not sufficient to be either dangerous or alarming." From this description it will be seen that Mr. Shakspear has only improved upon the rope bridges of the Hindoos of northern India.

The river Alacananda, over which the rope bridge represented in the engraving is thrown, by its junction with another considerable stream twelve miles west from Serinagur, forms the Ganges. Above the junction there are numerous large fish, upwards of four feet in length, daily fed by Brahmins. They swim to the water's edge, and take their food from the hands of their protectors, who will not allow them to be caught. They will eat bread or rice, and allow their noses to be touched with the finger. There is likewise in the same river a species of fish nearly as large as a small shark, being occasionally more than seven feet long, and remarkably beautiful both in form and colour. It is caught and eaten by the natives, being very delicate and of an extremely fine flavour.

The Hindoos have a singular mode of taking fish here as well as in many parts of the Ganges by means of tame otters, which swim round the shoals and drive their prey into nets, frequently seizing the finest in their teeth and taking them on shore to their masters. They are as tame as dogs, and act with a

sagacity altogether surprising. It is no uncommon thing to see these creatures plunge into the water and select the finest fish in a shoal, which they pursue with the most patient perseverance until they succeed in capturing it. Having secured the fugitive, they immediately make for the shore and lay it on the bank at the feet of the fisherman, who rewards them for their perseverance with a fish of inferior bulk, but, no doubt, in the estimation of these dumb fish-catchers, of as good a flavour. They are valuable assistants to those who take the trouble to train them, in rendering the employment of these latter, which is generally laborious and seldom very profitable, much more lucrative than it would otherwise be. The poor Hindoos are exceedingly partial to them, and treat them with great kindness: of this the otters appear to be fully sensible, as they are not sparing of their energies for the benefit of their protectors, for whom they toil with a readiness which would almost indicate a consciousness that they are promoting the interests of those who always act towards them with the greatest tenderness. They are kept without the least expense, procuring their own food in the rivers, and requiring little or no care. They live in the huts of those who tame them, allowing the children of their owners to play with them like so many dogs, being equally harmless and tractable. Though extremely fierce in their natural state — so much so that few dogs will venture to attack them,—when domesticated they are docile to the last degree. They swim with such rapidity, that their finny prey seldom escape when pursued by them.

The custom of training otters to fish is not peculiar to India; it is likewise practised in other parts of the world, especially in Europe, with considerable success. The otters are taken when quite young, and taught to do their master's bidding without much difficulty, being at first fed upon small fish, which they eat with great readiness, without showing much disturbance at their confinement. As they grow stronger and more familiarised to their new condition, their food is gradually changed, the proportion of fish being from time to time diminished, and vegetables with meat and milk being substituted, until they are finally fed with bread alone or chiefly. Upon this they thrive well, and become remarkably hardy, appearing ultimately to prefer it to fish. Though easily trained, it requires some skill and considerable perseverance to render them available in fishing. When, however, they are well taught, their sagacity is equal to that of any dog, and their fidelity may at all times be relied on. In order to teach them to fish for their owners, they are first made to fetch and carry, as those spaniels known by the name of retrievers are brought to do; but this of course is attended with some difficulty, and requires much patience, as, until they are thoroughly instructed, they have not the same docility as a dog. When they have become so tame as to follow their master, he throws before them a factitious fish, made of leather and stuffed with wool. The otter immediately seizes it, and by dint of patient teaching, the animal is at length induced to drop it into the hand of his owner, who rewards him with a caress, and

finally with food. When this has been accomplished, the otter is taken to the river's side, and a dead fish thrown into the water. From having been taught to bring the factitious, it soon learns to bring the real fish at its master's bidding. The next step, from the dead to the living object, is sufficiently easy; and when once properly trained, these creatures seldom fail in securing their prey and relinquishing it at the bidding of those who have reared them, to whom they almost invariably evince a strong attachment. In some instances even in Europe they are valuable property to poachers, who make a good deal of money by the assistance of their dumb dependants. A tame otter sent into a pond will drive the fish into a corner, seize the finest among them, swim to shore, and lay its capture at its master's feet.

"When thus tamed, they seem to become attached to their owners. Bewick informs us that William Collins of Rimmerston, near Wooler, had a tame otter which followed him wherever he went. He frequently carried it to fish in the river; and when satiated, it never failed to return to its master. One day, in the absence of Collins, being taken out by his son to fish, instead of returning as usual, it refused to come at the accustomed call and was lost. The father tried every means to recover it; and after several days' search, being near the place where his son had lost it, and calling it by its name, to his inexpressible joy it came creeping to his feet, and showed many genuine marks of affection and firm attachment." *

* Wood's Zoography, vol. i. pp. 263, 4.

CHAPTER XXI.

THOUGH many modern travellers have visited different parts of that mountainous region which separates Hindostan from Thibet and Tartary, still little appears to be known of Boutan beyond what was communicated by Captain Turner nearly forty years ago. His volume, published in 1800, furnishes a tolerably accurate account of the country and its inhabitants; though as his stay was short, his narrative is necessarily superficial and meagre.

The military character of the Bouteas is far inferior to that of mountaineers generally. Their troops are ill disciplined, and appear to want both confidence in themselves and in their leaders. Even in the hottest attack they are never regardless of their personal safety, but take shelter behind anything that happens to be near when danger threatens them. They are especially cautious in protecting themselves against missile weapons, arrows above all, lest these should be poisoned—for of this they have an extreme dread. When wounded with arrows, they generally consider their case hopeless, and express great terror at the apprehension of being thus cut off. Their hostile appearance is sufficiently formidable to awe their immediate neighbours; but a very small European force might readily, and with little

opposition, obtain possession of the whole country. The passes of their mountains are usually defended by a castle built with considerable compactness and solidity, and affording a tolerably good protection against the weapons employed by the enemies by whom they are commonly surrounded, but no security against cannon.

The engraving represents a guard-house near the Rajah's palace. It is a square, plain stone building, about fifteen or sixteen feet high, having an upper story. It stands in a small valley surrounded by hills, at an elevation of several thousand feet above the Gangetic plain. Before the entrance are two Boutea soldiers in the military costume of their country, and two men in the ordinary garb of the common cultivators of the soil. The inhabitants of Boutan are a robust, hardy race, and though not deficient in personal courage generally speaking, possess little of the heroism of true military spirits. Their dispositions are rather peaceable than warlike; they consequently make but indifferent soldiers. Being utterly without discipline, they have no confidence in their leaders, and distrust each other. As their forces are summoned indiscriminately on great emergencies, they are composed principally of herdsmen, husbandmen, and villagers of various occupations, who form an ill-armed, ill-assorted, undisciplined rabble, never acting in concert, but carrying on a tumultuary conflict, fortunately for them against enemies as undisciplined and as ill appointed as themselves. In their battles they prefer stratagem to open assault, every man acting separately and resorting to his own cunning to

protect him from or enable him to destroy his enemy. Being tolerably good marksmen, they conceal themselves and fire as opportunity offers; but as their enemies for the most part adopt the same mode of warfare, it will not create surprise that few are killed or wounded in their military encounters.

There are a few troops in regular pay about the person of the Rajah, composing his body-guard. These are better appointed than the great body of his forces. Their accoutrements, when fully equipped for the field, are very cumbrous. The body is wrapped in a quantity of loose clothing, which must tend greatly to embarrass their movements. In addition to the common mantle, which reaches nearly to the calf of the leg, a blanket is frequently thrown over the shoulders; and sometimes they are encumbered with a thick quilted jacket capable of resisting an arrow, and in many instances even the thrust of a spear. Their helmet is of simple construction, being formed of cane stained with a particular dye, and coiled in the shape of a flattened cone: some of these helmets, however, are made of cotton rope quilted between two pieces of cloth. On each side are small flaps, which at night may be turned down over the ears to secure them from cold; and in front there is a strap, intended in like manner to protect the nose, which else might become frost-bitten. These helmets, though not quite proof against the stroke of a sword, are sufficiently so to prevent in general a fatal issue. Their conical shape diverts the blow from its intended aim; and this effect the slippery surface of the cane tends greatly to aid.

The shield employed by the Boutea warrior is large but light, being made of the same stained cane as his helmet. It is conical, like most Indian shields, and slung over the shoulder, covering the entire body except the head and legs. In his right arm the soldier grasps a bow full six feet in length; a quiver of arrows being hung by a belt behind his back, and so conveniently placed that he can readily withdraw the arrows from their receptacle over his left shoulder. The bow is made of bamboo, and, when unstrung, perfectly straight. The cane employed is a sort peculiar to the hills, being remarkable for its strength and elasticity. "The string is drawn by the thumb, armed with a ring of bone, or a piece of thick leather bent round it; and the fore-finger, crossed upon the nail, serves to give additional force to the operation.

"The arrow is formed of a species of dwarf bamboo produced among these mountains; it is headed by a flattened barb of pointed iron, the sides of which are sometimes grooved, or, which appears to answer the same purpose, the barb on either side is a little turned back to admit the lodgment of poison, with which deadly substance it is sometimes charged.

"The poison made use of, so far as I could collect, is an inspissated vegetable juice; but from what plant it is obtained I never could distinctly learn: it appeared to my observation black and gummy, in consistence and appearance much resembling crude opium.

"Some Bouteas are armed with matchlock muskets, to the stock of which is attached a fork, which serves as a rest when the warrior crouches to take

his aim. Their fire-arms are very contemptible, evidently of no use but in the fairest weather, when the match will burn and the priming in an open pan take fire. In the management of the sword and shield they are sufficiently dexterous, and are undoubtedly most excellent archers.

"They have wall-pieces, to which indeed the calibre of some of their matchlocks is scarcely inferior; but they have no cannon. Other instruments of war were mentioned to me; one in particular, with which they heave huge stones in the attack of strong castles, and a sort of arrow loaded with combustible matter for the purpose of setting fire to buildings; but neither of these came under my observation." *

The Bouteas are expert marksmen, and will frequently pierce a mark scarcely larger than the crown of a hat at a hundred and fifty paces. None of the archers of the plains can compete with them at so long a shot; but these latter infinitely surpass the hillmen in skill at short distances. I have frequently witnessed extraordinary feats in this way, some of which it may not be uninteresting to record. In a village on the Malabar coast, where a party of natives were displaying their dexterity in archery, I once saw a man throw an orange in the air and transfix it with his arrow three several times successively. He next placed a person at a distance of about thirty yards, with an orange in his hand suspended by a string attached to a stick from three to four feet long. At a given signal the person holding the orange swung it round, and while it

* Turner's Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Thibet, pp. 119, 120.

was in a state of the most rapid revolution the archer sent his shaft directly through it. This he repeated several times amid the tumultuous applause of the spectators. Ten sparrows were next successively let out of a cage, six of which he shot on the wing. It had been previously agreed that he should receive a rupee for every sparrow hit by him, and forfeit a similar sum for every one he missed; he consequently became a winner of two rupees—a good fortnight's provision in India for a single man. The bow employed on this occasion was not above three feet long, but extremely stiff, and requiring considerable strength as well as skill to discharge with its full effect. Several of the other archers present showed a good deal of dexterity, one of them passing an arrow twelve times out of sixteen through an iron ring about four inches in diameter, at a distance of twenty-five paces.

Some of the tribes of plunderers who infest the hills in different parts of Hindostan are uncommonly skilful in the use of the bow, often killing birds on the wing and hares in full career. They use no other weapon except the dagger and a short scimitar, and these latter only when they venture into houses and places where their arrows cannot be rendered effective.

CHAPTER XXII.

In the mountainous regions of Boutan the accommodation for travellers is very uncertain. Occasionally is found in the passes erected for that purpose, a small empty hut, which affords a welcome shelter from the violent storms that frequently take place in those alpine solitudes. Sometimes the clouds appear suddenly to roll towards one common centre, and condensing into a thick mist, involve every object, investing the whole landscape with a general hue of sickly grey, rendering the air damp and chilly, and adding greatly to the natural difficulties of the route. Upon these occasions the Bouteas invaribly maintain a profound silence, in order that their voices may not disturb the elements; for they gravely assert that even so slight a concussion of the air as that produced by the voice in ordinary conversation would open the gathered reservoirs above, and cause them immediately to void their stores in torrents of rain.

The violence of the storms which so often occur in these hills can scarcely be imagined by those who have never witnessed them; they far exceed anything ever seen in the more mountainous districts of Europe. The thunder rolls down the precipices

and is reverberated from hill to hill with a loudness and continuity perfectly appalling. The lightning absolutely seems to fill the valleys, wrapping every object in a sheet of flame, the flashes being so successive that there is scarcely time to draw breath between the intervals. The hot sulphurous smell—the smoking ground fired in places by the electric blaze—the singed shrubs, with occasionally the riven and charred trunks of huge trees quivering like grim and blackened skeletons, form a union of objects which the eye cannot meet without terror.

The quantity of rain poured from the clouds is so prodigious, that, in an almost inconceivably short space of time, from the side of every mountain within the tempest's range, cataracts are seen pouring into the valleys beneath, dashing from rock to rock, or from ledge to ledge, foaming, sparkling, and hissing with a turbulence which drowns every other sound but that produced by the awful crashings of the thunder above. The wind, rushing in terrific eddies down the slopes of the hills, tears away in its impetuous progress the smaller growth, laying them in many places perfectly bare, uprooting trees, and hurling huge masses of rock into the ravines below, through which the congregated waters are forcing their way, interrupted by these and other impediments.

If the traveller should not obtain shelter during these fierce conflicts of the elements, his peril must become imminent, for the wind would most probably sweep him from the path and send him to his grave amid the foaming waters. These mountain storms are generally accompanied by whirlwinds which nothing

can resist; even horses are borne away in the mighty vortex, being elevated many feet into the air and dashed over the mountain's brow. The natives take shelter, on these occasions, in nooks under the projections of the hills; but even here they are exposed to great danger, as the superincumbent masses occasionally give way, sweeping them down the precipice to certain destruction.

It sometimes happens that whole villages are destroyed by those dreadful hurricanes, some of the lesser cones of the hills being dislocated and cast into the valleys, involving houses and inhabitants in one common ruin. An event of this kind happened a few years before Captain Turner's visit to Boutan. One night, during the frightful climax of one of those mountain storms, nine houses were dashed from the brow of a hill upon which they had been erected but a few years previously, and their unhappy inmates, whilst reposing in imagined security, were buried beneath the ruins: none remained alive to tell the tale of signal disaster. Unawed, however, by so terrible a warning, another village was subsequently built in the same locality; nor does the slightest apprehension appear to be entertained of the recurrence of a similar accident.

So accustomed are these mountaineers from infancy to the numerous perils of those elevated regions, that they cease to regard them, and being all predestinarians, they consider themselves as secure when the hurricane roars around their dwellings as when the sun shines upon them, and the fresh morning breeze fans their cheeks with a gentle touch that

spreads over them the rich glow of buoyant and elastic health. Fully impressed with the belief that their day of visitation is noted down in the vast volume of fate, and that they therefore cannot be called upon to relinquish this world until their time is come, they look with perfect indifference upon those appalling circumstances which would excite the most active terror in the bosoms of men whose lot has been cast under equally sunny but less turbulent skies.

Among the various troubles to which these hardy highlanders are subject, in addition to the dangers that constantly beset them, may be numbered a small venomous fly which, at particular seasons, so infests their houses as completely to disturb their domestic quiet. It is something like the musquito, though differing from it in many particulars, resembling it more in character than in form. Like that annoying insect, it is furnished with a proboscis, which it plunges into the pores of the skin, and draws blood without at first causing pain, the person attacked not being conscious of the puncture until the insidious enemy has been some time at its work. When gorged with blood, it takes flight, leaving upon the wounded part a small black blister full of extravasated and infected blood. This tumour gradually enlarges, becomes highly inflamed, and causes the most distressing irritation. If scratched, an ulcer is frequently produced, and sometimes very serious consequences ensue; though the temperate lives of the natives generally secure them from an issue to which Europeans would be extremely liable.

Most of the hillmen are marked with the punctures made by this venomous fly. On some occasions the skin peels from the wounds, and, where the habit of body is not good, phagedenous sores break out which are difficult to be got rid of. These troublesome insects may with truth be called the tyrants of the hills.

The inhabitants of Boutan are great believers in demonology, and ascribe all physical evils, especially diseases of every kind, to the malignant influence of evil spirits, against which they have recourse to charms of various descriptions. Their priests are supposed capable of exorcising these infernal agents by the employment of potent spells; and it may fairly be suspected that among so superstitious a people those reverend functionaries find their enchantments too lucrative a trade to be abandoned for the questionable benefactions of a more enlightened belief. Whenever a person is sick, the doctor is sent for: if he pronounces the case a serious one, the priest is instantly summoned, who commences his incantations, equally to his own advantage and the sufferer's delusion. Should the strength of the patient's faith, or of his constitution, triumph over his disease, the Gylong, or minister, has the credit of having expelled it from the body of which it was supposed to have taken possession: should death, however, take place in spite of the holy man's incantations, it is at once concluded that the unhappy victim of superstition had, in consequence of his numerous and heinous crimes, put himself too completely in the devil's power to be rescued even by the powerful enchantments of a Gylong.

The following extract from Captain Turner's narrative will sufficiently show the credulity of the Bouteas.

"Two musicians, placed at a distance, played upon reed instruments in wild and not unharmonious strains, while the Rajah held us in conversation on the customs and produce of foreign countries; subjects on which he sought for information with insatiable avidity. I selected the most striking peculiarities of all nations for his entertainment; and he, in turn, told me of wonders for which I claim no other credit than that of repeating with fidelity the story of my author.

"In the first place, he mentioned a race of people of uncommon stature, inhabiting a prodigiously high mountain, whose base was many days' journey in circumference. The country lay east of Boutan, and being far distant, his subjects had never any intercourse with it; but two of these people had some years ago wandered hither, and they were the admiration of all the inhabitants, being not less, according to his description, than eight feet high. They stayed but a short time, and seemed happy at the thoughts of returning to their gigantic brethren.

"In the same range of mountains, north of Assam, he informed me there was a species of human beings with short straight tails, which, according to report, were extremely inconvenient to them, as they were inflexible; in consequence of which the parties wearing them were obliged to dig holes in the ground before they could attempt to sit down.

"He had a very curious creature, he told me, then in his possession, a sort of horse, with a horn growing

from the middle of its forehead. He had once another of the same species, but it died. I could not discover from whence it came, or obtain any other explanation than 'burra dûra!'—a great way off. I expressed an earnest desire to see a creature so curious and uncommon, and told him that we had representations of an animal called a unicorn, to which his description answered, but it was generally considered fabulous. He again assured me of the truth of what he told me, and promised I should see it. It was some distance from Tassisudon,* and his people paid it religious respect; but I never had a sight of it.

"The last story I shall notice is an account the Rajah gave me of an adventure of his own, designed not less to magnify our opinion of his zeal than to add respect to his religious character in the estimation of his own disciples. It was introduced in consequence of our conversation turning on Thibet. He painted to me the difficulties of the way, and the wide disparity of country and of climate. 'I have seen, I have experienced, and speak from my own knowledge: for,' he continued, 'some years ago, putting on the appearance of a mendicant, or fakeer, I made a pilgrimage to Lassa, and visited the holy temples, sacred as the seats of the superior objects of our worship. My journey was performed all the way on foot, with one companion. I walked over and saw every part of the extensive city of Lassa; I paid my devotions at the sacred shrine of Pootalah;† and, after a residence of

* The Rajah's capital.

† The chief monastery and residence of Dalai Lama, near Lassa.

about fourteen days, returned, in the same manner I went, incognito, to Boutan.'

"I could not but express my surprise that the independent sovereign of an extensive region, who might have commanded every accommodation, attention, and respect from the neighbouring powers, should thus voluntarily relinquish the prerogative of rank, and submit to travel, under every disadvantage, exposed to all sorts of difficulty, hardship, and inconvenience. He answered me, that the humble character he assumed best accorded with the purpose of his journey, which, to render it meritorious, required some degree of penance; and he hinted at the inconvenience which inevitably arises to the subjects of every state when a chief moves through the country with a dignity and pomp suited to his exalted station."*

With all their superstitions, the natives of Boutan are a kind-hearted and benevolent race, hospitable to strangers of whatever religion, simple, and generally honest. They have the Tartar expression of countenance; the eye being small and black, with long pointed corners like those of the Chinese, a peculiarity which strongly marks their Tartar origin. They have scarcely any beard, their eyebrows and eyelashes being likewise so scanty as to be scarcely perceptible: they are nevertheless tall, stout, well-grown men, frequently exceeding the stature of six feet, with muscular and well-proportioned limbs, and light olive complexions.

* Turner's Account of an Embassy, &c. pp. 156, 7, 8.

Castle of Punaka in Bootan

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE palace of Ponaka is an extensive and spacious building, having a citadel nearly in the centre, surmounted by a gilt canopy. It is composed almost entirely of wood. It lies in the bottom of a beautiful glen, surrounded by gigantic eminences, and is built on a small level peninsula, the promontory upon which it stands being washed by the waters of two rivers, the Matchieu and Patchieu, immediately before their junction. The united streams of these rivers, after they have passed the peninsula, flow forwards with a rapid though undisturbed current until they take a more precipitous course towards the plains. A covered wooden bridge of ingenious construction is thrown over the Patchieu before its junction with the other river, leading directly to a doorway in a wall which separates the court-yard from the Rajah's garden. Beyond this, at a short distance from the palace, is a small but commodious pavilion, erected by the Rajah for the entertainment of strangers. It stands upon the bank of the Matchieu, under a large spreading tree.

The whole valley is remarkably fertile, being to a considerable extent a perfect level, and at all times covered with the most beautiful verdure. During the hottest season of the year the temperature is generally

delightful. The entire length of the valley through which the last-mentioned river passes is planted with pine-trees, the branches of which overhang the stream and cast a refreshing shade on the land side, excluding the ardent rays of the sun reflected from the slopes of the hills.

The pavilion in which the Rajah receives all strange guests is supported on high pillars, commodious, light, and airy. It is ascended by a broad strong ladder, the upper story only, as is the case with all houses in Boutan, being inhabited,—for the lower is invariably made a receptacle for lumber, implements of husbandry, and similar things: in many dwellings cattle are stalled in the lower chambers. Within the Rajah's garden is an elegant summer-house, containing three rooms on a floor, whither the prince during his stay at Ponaka frequently retires to the enjoyment of a temporary solitude, by way of relaxation from the frequent excitements and vexations of state business.

This palace is the Rajah's winter residence, and was the favourite of that prince, who governed Boutan at the time of Captain Turner's visit. It is said he expended a considerable sum of money in enlarging and adorning it. The internal decorations, therefore, of this royal residence are much more splendid than those of any other palace in the district. Strangers are not admitted;—an order so strictly enforced, that a bribe fails to purchase the least relaxation of the court restriction. The gardens are open to the inspection of strangers, and contain a great variety of fruits, among which are peaches, apples, and pears; but

these are generally small and ill-flavoured, in consequence, no doubt, of imperfect cultivation,—for there is no reason why, with due care and a moderate application of skill, they should not be brought to the greatest perfection, since the climate is highly favourable for the production of fruits and vegetables both of Indian and European growth.

During the months of July and August almost every variety of temperature exists in Boutan, from summer-heat to freezing-point. The distance of a few leagues will bring the traveller to a change of climate nearly in the extreme, as is the case in the locality just described; for while the inhabitants of Ponaka are clothed in the lightest garments, and constantly seeking the shade in order to escape the oppressive heat of a vertical sun, those of Gassa are under the influence of cold so piercing as to require the warmest clothing, being chilled by the perpetual snows which cap the summits of the mountains upon which they have fixed their insecure habitations: and yet these two places are in sight of each other.

Although the soil in Boutan is everywhere singularly productive, yet the natives do not avail themselves of the facilities which nature has put into their hands. They bestow little or no labour to increase the produce of their land. What nature gives they gather with patient contentment, and seek not to obtain those luxuries which demand the sacrifice of ease. Their gardens produce almost every variety of fruit; but scarcely any reaches to a state of maturity, because no endeavours are used to ensure so easy a result. Oranges are here abundant and very fine;

so are peaches and apricots, and likewise pomegranates;—walnuts also grow in great perfection: and with these luxuries the simple-minded but indolent Bouteas are content. They have vegetables in equal abundance and variety; but generally these are such as would be rejected by a more fastidious European taste, on account of their harshness or rankness of flavour. To this, however, the turnip peculiar to the country is a notable exception, being one of the finest esculents in the world. It is very large, entirely free from fibres, and remarkably sweet. The Bouteas are justly proud of it, and eat it in vast quantities, it being as nutritive as it is delicious.

Although indifferent about the produce of their gardens, the natives of Boutan are sufficiently careful in the cultivation of the soil generally. They are not bad husbandmen,—if such a term may be applied where the labours of husbandry are mostly performed by women, who are sufficiently industrious and by no means deficient in skill. They sow, plant, dress, and weed the fields; water the pastures where these are in situations to require it; reap, gather in the corn, prepare it for the mill, grind, and finally make it into bread. They are constantly occupied in the most arduous labours, while their tyrants enjoy the luxurious indolence of repose under trees with which their valleys abound, or bask in inglorious ease upon the floors of their habitations. The women are here, as in all Eastern countries, the slaves of their husbands and fathers, who usually treat them with heartless indifference.

The Boutea wives are distinguished for their

fidelity to their husbands, being seldom known to violate the marriage contract; and when this does happen, it is almost invariably followed with fatal punishment: though in some districts of these mountains the greatest licentiousness prevails among the common people.

A story is related of a Boutea woman of great personal beauty, who having attracted the notice of a man much her superior in station, the latter made to her proposals of dishonourable love. She rejected his offers with indignation, but, knowing the jealous temper of her husband, thought it prudent to conceal the fact from him, fearing that once to rouse his suspicions would be to provoke certain misery for the rest of her days. The disappointed lover, burning with rage at her indifference towards him and her determined resistance of his proposals, took care to excite the husband's jealousy by spreading a report that he had seduced his wife from her conjugal fidelity. The demon of suspicion was immediately quickened in the bosom of the irascible Boutea, and seeking his wife, he vehemently upbraided her with her imagined infamy. She protested in vain against his unjust credulity; but finding that her solemn declarations of innocence only tended to increase his austerity, she told him that if he would accompany her to a certain spot, she would convince him his suspicions were unfounded. He consented, and the wife walked silently before him until they reached the brow of a precipice.

"Here," she said, "I first met the man with whom you accuse me of having had criminal intercourse. Here I treated his offers of base attachment

with scorn. In consequence of my rejection, he has poisoned your mind, and cast a stigma upon my innocence which I will now efface, or perish."

The brow of her husband darkened as she spoke; —he did not utter a word. His breast heaved beneath the quilted tunic which covered it; but his compressed lips showed that his belief in his wife's guilt was not in the slightest degree abated.

"Tell me," she said, elevating her voice sufficiently to waken the mountain echoes, "do you still believe me guilty?"

"I do!" he cried vehemently, at the same time stamping his foot so fiercely upon the rock which frowned over the deep hollow beneath, that it seemed for an instant to vibrate under the stroke.

"Then you shall be avenged!" said the heroic woman, and instantly sprang over the precipice.

The husband started with horror as he heard her body crash on the rocks below. The light of conviction passed in a moment through his brain with the vehemence of a whirlwind, and he felt too late that his unhappy wife had fallen a sacrifice to his unjust suspicions. Not a syllable escaped his lips; but the settled determination of vengeance suddenly swelled his heart, which beat with so fierce a pulsation, that the bosom seemed too narrow to contain it. His eye glared with smothered fury. He saw with the clearness of conviction that the villain who had attempted the seduction of a virtuous matron, had wantonly rendered her the victim of a jealous husband's suspicions, and he determined that such a wretch should pay the just forfeit of his infamy. He

forthwith, therefore, sent a message to the author of his present misery, as from his wife, stating her sorrow at having rejected his offers of attachment, and proposing that he should meet her on the very spot which had been the scene of the melancholy catastrophe just described. The delighted lover instantly fell into the snare, and just as the dusky shades of evening were beginning to tint the tops of the mountains, he quitted his home and proceeded with a bounding heart towards the place of supposed assignation. By the time he reached the place, he saw a figure through the gloom standing on the extreme verge of the precipice. Supposing it to be the object of his unholy love, he sprang forward — in another moment he was hurled headlong from the height, and his death-shriek was answered by the hoarse laugh of the avenger, who stood above the dark gulf into which he had plunged the detested and unsuspecting destroyer of his peace, invoking all the demons with whom his superstitious worship had made him familiar, to torture the spirit which he had just sent to dwell among them for ever.

Such acts of sanguinary revenge are not uncommon among all half-civilised nations; and though the inhabitants of Boutan are by no means an implacable race generally, yet individual instances of ferocity may be heard of which show that the elements of the fiercer passons exist among them, and only require the necessary provocation to be excited into terrific energy of action.

Although these people have had little intercourse with any nation more advanced in civilisation

than themselves, they exhibit no contemptible knowledge of the mechanical arts; and even in mere matters of taste they are in many instances superior to the more enlightened communities inhabiting the plains. Their architecture, though plain, is admirably adapted both to the climate and locality in which they dwell; and some of their manufactures are not only skilfully produced, but likewise extremely elegant. Their singular dexterity in the construction of bridges is equal to that of any people in the world; nor is the beauty and symmetry of these structures inferior to their simplicity, strength, and usefulness.

It is surprising how much knowledge even the man of science may gain by visiting countries in a comparative state of barbarism, where the mere intuitive appliances of human ingenuity, which among more civilised races have vanished with the lapse of time and been succeeded by higher principles of knowledge, are yet to be seen in all their striking aspects of elementary power, showing that the human mind, in every condition of humanity and under the heaviest pressure of national degradation, is still a mighty vehicle, to the operation of which there is no assignable limit, and that man is everywhere, even under the greatest social and moral disadvantages, as Shakspeare has represented him, "the beauty of the world and the paragon of animals."

THE END.

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